

BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR'S

LIFE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR,

JESUS CHRIST.

A REVISED EDITION.

WITH NOTES.

BY THE REV. ROBERT PHILIP,

AUTHOR OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GUIDES AND MANLY PIETY.

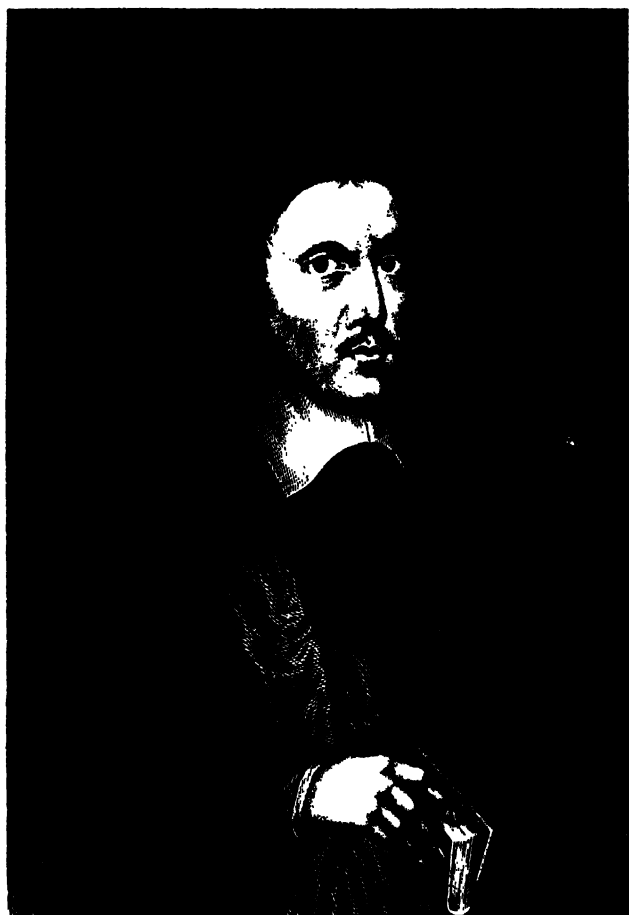
WITH SPLENDID ENGRAVINGS, FROM THE OLD MASTERS.

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BISHOP RUST'S

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF BISHOP TAYLOR;

FROM THE FUNERAL SERMON.

THE fame of the great person, whose obsequies we here come to celebrate, is so great throughout the world, that he stands in no need of an encomium; and yet his worth is much greater than his fame. It is impossible not to speak great things of him, and yet it is impossible to speak what he deserves; and the meanness of an oration will but sully the brightness of his excellences. But custom requires that something should be said, and it is a duty and a debt that we owe unto his memory; and I hope his great soul, if it hath any knowledge of what is done here below, will not be offended at the smallness of our offering.

He was born at Cambridge, and brought up in the free school there, and was ripe for the university, afore custom would allow of his admittance; but by the time he was thirteen years old, he was entered into Caius College; and as soon as he was a graduate, he was chosen fellow. Had he lived amongst the ancient Pagans, he had been ushered into the world with a miracle, and swans must have danced and sung at his birth; and he must have been a great hero, and no less than the son of Apollo, the god of wisdom and eloquence.

He was a man long afore he was of age; and knew little more of the state of childhood, than its innocency and pleasantness. From the university, by the time he was master of arts, he removed to London, and became a public lecturer in the church of St. Paul's; where he preached to the admiration and astonishment of his auditory; and by his florid and youthful beauty, and sweet and pleasant air, and sublime and raised discourses, he made his hearers take him for some young angel, newly descended from the visions of glory. The fame of this new star, that outshone all the rest of the firmament, quickly came to the notice of the great archbishop of Canterbury, who would needs have him preach before him; which he performed not less to his wonder than satisfaction. His discourse was beyond exception, and beyond imitation: yet the wise prelate thought him too young; but the great youth humbly begged his grace "to pardon that fault," and promised, "If he lived, he would mend it." However the grand patron of learning and ingenuity, thought it for the advantage of the world, that such mighty parts should be afforded better opportunities of study and improvement, than a course of constant preaching

would allow of: and to that purpose he placed him in his own college of All Soul's in Oxford: where love and admiration still waited upon him: which, so long as there is any spark of ingenuity in the breasts of men, must needs be the inseparable attendants of so extraordinary a worth and sweetness. He had not been long here, afore my lord of Canterbury bestowed upon him the rectory of Uphingham, in Rutlandshire, and soon after preferred him to be chaplain to King Charles the Martyr, of blessed and immortal memory. Thus were preferments heaped upon him, but still less than his deserts; and that not through the fault of his great masters, but because the amplest honours and rewards were poor and inconsiderable, compared with the greatness of his worth and merit.

This great man had no sooner launched into the world, but a fearful tempest arose, and a barbarous and unnatural war, disturbed a long and uninterrupted peace and tranquillity, and brought all things into disorder and confusion; but his religion taught him to be loyal, and engaged him on his prince's side, whose cause and quarrel he always owned and maintained with a great courage and constancy; till at last, he and his little fortune were shipwrecked in that great hurricane that overturned both church and state: This fatal storm cast him ashore in a private corner of the world, and a tender providence shrouded him under her wings, and the prophet was fed in the wilderness; and his great worthiness procured him friends, that supplied him with bread and necessaries. In this solitude he began to write those excellent discourses, which are enough of themselves to furnish a library, and will be famous to all succeeding generations, for their greatness of wit, and profoundness of judgment, and richness of fancy, and clearness of expression, and copiousness of invention, and general usefulness to all the purposes of a Christian: And by these he soon got a great reputation among all persons of judgment and impartiality, and his name will grow greater still, as the world grows better and wiser.

When he had spent some years in this retirement, it pleased God to visit his family with sickness, and to take to himself the dear pledges of his favour, three sons of great hopes and expectations, within the space of two or three months. And though he had learned a quiet submission unto the divine will; yet the affliction touched him so sensibly, that it made him desirous to leave the country; and going into London he there met my Lord Conway, a person of great honour and generosity; who making him a kind proffer, the good man embraced it: and that brought him over into Ireland, and settled him at Portmore, a place made for study and contemplation, which he therefore dearly loved; and here he wrote his "Cases of Conscience;" a book that is able alone to give its author immortality.

By this time the wheel of providence brought about the King's happy restoration, and there began a new world, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and out of a confused chaos brought forth beauty and order, and all the three nations were inspired with a new life, and became drunk with an excess of joy. Among the rest, this loyal subject went over to congratulate the prince and people's happiness, and bear a part in the universal triumph.

It was not long ere his sacred majesty began the settlement of the church, and the great Doctor Jeremy Taylor was resolved upon, for the bishoprick of Down and Connor; and not long after, Dromore was added to it; and it was but reasonable that the king and church should consider their champion, and reward the pains and sufferings he underwent in the defence of their cause and honour. With what care and faithfulness he discharged his office, we are all his witnesses; what good rules and directions he gave his clergy, and how he taught us the practice

of them by his own example. Upon his coming over bishop, he was made a privy counsellor; and the university of Dublin gave him their testimony, by recommending him for their vice chancellor; which honourable office he kept till his dying day.

During his being in this see, he wrote several excellent discourses, particularly his "Dissuasive from Popery" (which was received by a general approbation); and a vindication of it (now in the press) from some impertinent cavillers, that pretend to answer books, when there is nothing towards it, more than the very title-page. This great prelate improved his talent with a mighty industry, and managed his stewardship rarely well; and his Master, when he called for his accounts, found him busy and at his work, and employed upon an excellent subject, "A Discourse upon the Beatitudes;" which, if finished, would have been of great use to the world, and solved most of the cases of conscience that occur to a Christian, in all the varieties of states and conditions. But the all-wise God hath ordained it otherwise, and hath called home his good servant, to give him a portion in that blessedness that Jesus Christ hath promised to all his faithful disciples and followers.

Thus having given you a brief account of his life, I know you will now expect a character of his person: but I foresee it will befall him, as it does all glorious subjects, that are but disparaged by a commendation. One thing I am secure of, that I shall not be thought to speak hyperbolies; for the subject can hardly be reached, by any expressions; for he was none of God's ordinary works, but his endowments were so many and so great, as really made him a miracle.

Nature had befriended him much in his constitution; for he was a person of a most sweet and obliging humour, of great candour and ingenuity; and there was so much of salt and fineness of wit, and prettiness of address in his familiar discourses, as made his conversation have all the pleasantness of a comedy, and all the usefulness of a sermon: his soul was made up of harmony, and he never spake, but he charmed his hearer, not only with the clearness of his reason; but all his words, and his very tone and cadences were strangely musical.

But that which did most of all captivate and enravish, was, the gaiety and richness of his fancy; for he had much in him of that natural enthusiasm, that inspires all great poets and orators; and there was a genefous ferment in his blood and spirits, that set his fancy bravely awork, and made it swell, and teem, and become pregnant to such degrees of luxuriance, as nothing but the greatness of his wit and judgment, could have kept within due bounds and measures.

And indeed it was a rare mixture, and a single instance, hardly to be found in an age: for the great trier of wits has told us, that there is a peculiar and several complexion, required for wit and judgment, and fancy; and yet you might have found all these in this great personage, in their eminency and perfection. But that which made his wit and judgment so considerable, was the largeness and freedom of his spirit; for truth is plain and easy to a mind disentangled from superstition and prejudice: he was one of the Eclectics, a sort of brave philosophers that Laetius speaks of, that did not addict themselves to any particular sect, but ingenuously sought for truth among all the wrangling schools; and they found her miserably torn and rent to pieces, and parcelled into rags, by the several contending parties, and so disfigured and misshapen, that it was hard to know her; but they made a shift to gather up her scattered limbs, which, as soon as they came together by a strange sympathy and connaturalness, presently united into a lovely and

beautiful body. This was the spirit of this great man; he weighed mens' reasons, and not their names, and was not scared with the ugly vizors men usually put upon persons they hate, and opinions they dislike; nor affrighted with the anathemas and execrations of an infallible chair, which he looked upon only as bugbears to terrify weak and childish minds. He considered that it is not likely any one party should wholly engross truth to themselves; that obedience is the only way to true knowledge; (which is an argument that he has managed rarely well, in that excellent sermon of his, which he calls, "Via Intelligentiæ;") that God always, and only, teaches docile and ingenuous minds, that are willing to hear, and ready to obey according to their light: that it is impossible a pure, humble, resigned, God-like soul, should be kept out of heaven, whatever mistakes it might be subject to in this state of mortality; that the design of heaven is not to fill men's heads, and feed their curiosities, but to better their hearts, and mend their lives. Such considerations as these, made him impartial in his disquisitions, and give a due allowance to the reasons of his adversary, and contend for truth, and not for victory.

And now you will easily believe that an ordinary diligence would be able to make great improvements upon such a stock of parts and endowments: but to these advantages of nature, and excellency of his spirit, he added an indefatigable industry, and God gave a plentiful benediction; for there were very few kinds of learning, but he was a *Mystes*, and a great master in them: he was a rare humanist, and hugely versed in all the polite arts of learning; and had thoroughly concocted all the ancient moralists, Greek and Roman, poets and orators; and was not unacquainted with the refined wits of the later ages, whether French or Italian.

But he had not only the accomplishments of a gentleman, but so universal were his parts, that they were proportioned to every thing: and though his spirit and humour were made up of smoothness and gentleness, yet he could bear with the harshness and roughness of the schools; and was not unseen in their subtilties and spinosities, and upon occasion, could make them serve his purpose; and yet I believe, he thought many of them very near akin to the famous knight of Mancha, and would make sport sometimes with the romantic sophistry and fantastic adventures of school errantry. His skill was great, both in the civil and canon law, and casuistical divinity: and he was a rare conductor of souls, and knew how to counsel, and to advise; to solve difficulties, and determine cases, and quiet consciences. And he was no novice in *SERGEANT'S* new science of Controversy; but could manage an argument, and repartees with a strange dexterity; he understood what the several parties in Christendom have to say for themselves, and could plead their cause to better advantage than any advocate of their tribe: and when he had done, he could confute them too; and shew, that better arguments than ever they could produce for themselves, would afford no sufficient ground for their fond opinions.

It would be too great a task to pursue his accomplishments through the various kinds of literature: I shall content myself to add only his great acquaintance with the fathers and ecclesiastical writers, and the doctors of the first and purest ages both of the Greek and Latin church; which he has made use of against the Romanists, to vindicate the Church of England from the challenge of innovation, and prove her to be truly ancient, catholic, and apostolical.

But religion and virtue is the crown of all other accomplishments; and it was the glory of this great man, to be thought a Christian, and whatever you added to it, he looked upon as a term of diminution: and yet he was a zealous son of the Church of England; but that was

because he judged her, (and with great reason) a church the most purely Christian of any in the world. In his younger years he met with some assaults from popery; and the high pretensions of their religious orders were very accommodate to his devotional temper: but he was always so much master of himself, that he would never be governed by any thing but reason, and the evidence of truth, which engaged him in the study of those controversies; and to how good purpose, the world is by this time a sufficient witness. But the longer, and the more he considered, the worse he liked the Roman cause, and became at last to censure them with some severity; but I confess I have so great an opinion of his judgment, and the charitableness of his spirit, that I am afraid he did not think worse of them than they deserve.

But religion is not a matter of theory and orthodox notions; and it is not enough to believe aright, but we must practise accordingly; and to master our passions, and to make a right use of that control and power that God has given us over our own actions, is a greater glory than all other accomplishments that can adorn the mind of man; and therefore I shall close my character of this great personage with a touch upon some of those virtues, for which his memory will be precious to all posterity. He was a person of great humility; and, notwithstanding his stupendous parts, and learning, and eminency of place, he had nothing in him of pride and humour, but was courteous and affable, and of easy access, and would lend a ready ear to the complaints, yea to the impertinencies, of the meanest persons. His humility was coupled with an extraordinary piety; and, I believe, he spent the greatest part of his time in heaven; his solemn hours of prayer took up a considerable portion of his life; and we are not to doubt, but he had learned of St. Paul to pray continually; and that occasional ejaculations, and frequent aspirations, and emigrations of his soul after God, made the best part of his devotions. But he was not only a good man, Godward, but he was come to the top of St. Peter's gradation, and, to all his other virtues, added to a large diffusive charity. And, whoever ever compares his plentiful incomes, with the inconsiderable estate he left at his death, will be easily convinced that charity was steward for a great proportion of his revenue. But the hungry that he fed, and the naked that he clothed, and the distressed that he supplied, and the fatherless that he provided for, the poor children that he put to apprentice, and brought up at school, and maintained at the university, will now sound a trumpet to that charity which he dispersed with his right hand, but would not suffer his left hand to have any knowledge of it.

To sum up all in a few words; this great prelate had the good humour of a gentleman, the eloquence of an orator, the fancy of a poet, the acuteness of a schoolman, the profoundness of a philosopher, the wisdom of a counsellor, the sagacity of a prophet, the reason of an angel, and the piety of saint. He had devotion enough for a cloister, learning enough for an university, and wit enough for a college of virtuosi; and had his parts and endowments been parcelled out among his poor clergy that he left behind him, it would perhaps have made one of the best dioceses in the world! But alas! "Our Father, our Father! the horses of our Israel, and the chariot thereof:" he is gone, and has carried his mantle and his spirit along with him up to heaven; and the sons of the prophets have lost all their beauty and lustre which they enjoyed only from the reflection of his excellences, which were bright and radiant enough to cast a glory upon a whole order of men. But the sun of this our world, after many attempts to break through the crust of an earthly body, is at last swallowed up in the great vortex of eternity, and there all his maculæ are scattered and dissolved, and he is fixed in an orb of glory, and shines among his brethren-stars, that in their

several ages gave light to the world, and turned many souls unto righteousness; and we that are left behind, though we can never reach his perfections, may study to imitate his virtues, that we may at last come to sit at his feet in the mansions of glory; which God grant for his infinite mercies in Jesus Christ: to whom, with the Father, through the Eternal Spirit, be ascribed all honour and glory, worship and thanksgiving, love and obedience, now and for evermore. Amen

THERE is, certainly, no small portion of extravagance in this eulogy: but still, in reference to the general character and spirit of Taylor, it is nearer the truth, than the estimates of either Bonney or Bishop Heber. These biographers have corrected the historical inaccuracies of Rust: and displayed equal skill—the one in analyzing the principles, and the other in characterizing the works, of Taylor: but neither rises “to the height” of his “great argument.” A real admirer of the seraph of “GOLDEN GROVE,” whether affected by his beauties, or familiar with all his works, feels instinctively, that Bonney has but little spiritual or intellectual sympathy with them: and that Heber, seraphic as he himself was, teazes the heart by his criticisms, almost as often as he touches it by his eloquence. It was the strong consciousness of this feeling, that led me to adapt Bishop Rust’s highly coloured and enamelled miniature, in preference (as a Preface) to any of the anatomical full-lengths of Taylor. Any outline from them, would have been too formal and lifeless, to introduce this volume.

Jeremy Taylor, himself, needs no introduction to the British Public. He is the known and acknowledged Milton of theology. His own church glories in his name, and all churches pay homage to his genius. “His genius,” as the Eclectic Reviewer well says, “is not, however, that alone which supports him, in subjects strictly moral. Love of the Supreme good is the wing on which he rises, and his bright talents are but the decorations of that wing—like the feathered gold with which Milton beautifies his Raphael. As Taylor’s thought expands, he, as it were, leaves this earth, and rises as he soars. He rejoices in his flight, and makes us partake of his joy. It is a human seraph that moves before us, and gives us the living semblance of what is most truly great and noble, and pure and beatific.” Even Dr. Parr felt this, and said, “Hooker is the object of our reverence, Barrow of our admiration, but Taylor of our love.”

After these tributes of homage to his genius, nothing can be expected, or even wished for, from me. Indeed, no consideration, but the impossibility of bringing out this volume, in a form worthy of its author, and without risk to its spirited publisher, could have induced me to add either a note or a line to “the great exemplar.” No one can feel so deeply as I myself do, the humiliating position in which I have placed myself by this editorship. It is, however, a willing sacrifice at the shrine of Taylor. I have thus secured his introduction to my own circle; and am, therefore, quite content to bear all the odium of my presumption. For his sake, I hazarded the melancholy contrast, which I must ever present in this connexion.

ROBERT PHILIP.

Newington Green,
1835.

AN EXHORTATION

TO THE IMITATION OF

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

1. HOWEVER the person of Jesus Christ was depressed with a load of humble accidents, and shadowed with the darkneses of poverty and sad contingencies, so that the Jews, and the contemporary ages of the Gentiles, and the apostles themselves, could not at first discern the brightest essence of divinity; yet as a cypress transmits its excellency to the eye, made more greedy and apprehensive by that imperfect and weak restraint; so was the sanctity and holiness of the life of Jesus, glorious in its darkneses, and found confessors and admirers even in the midst of those despites which were done him by the contrariant designs of malice and contradictory ambition. Thus the wife of Pilate called him that just person; Pilate pronounced him guiltless; Judas said he was innocent; the devil himself called him the holy one of God. For however it might concern any man's mistaken ends to dislike the purpose of his preaching and spiritual kingdom, and those doctrines which were destructive of their self-complacencies and carnal securities; yet they could not deny but that he was a man of God, of exemplary sanctity, of an angelical chastity, of a life sweet, affable, and complying with human conversation, and as obedient to government as the most humble children of

the kingdom. And yet he was Lord of all the world.

2. And certainly very much of this was with a design, that he might shine to all the generations and ages of the world, and become a guiding star, and a pillar of fire to us in our journey. For we who believe that Jesus was perfect God and perfect man, do also believe that one minute of his intolerable passion, and every action of his, might have been satisfactory, and enough for the expiation and reconciliation of ten thousand worlds; and God might upon a less effusion of blood, and a shorter life of merit, if he had pleased, have accepted human nature to pardon and favour: but, that the holy Jesus hath added so many excellent instances of holiness, and so many degrees of passion, and so many kinds of virtues, is, that he might become an example to us, and reconcile our wills to him, as well as our persons to his heavenly Father.

3. And indeed it will prove but a sad consideration, that one drop of blood might be enough to obtain our pardon, and the treasures of his blood running out till the fountain itself was dry, shall not be enough to procure our conformity to him; that the smallest minute of his expense shall be enough to justify us, and the whole magazine shall not procure our sanc-

tification; that at a smaller expense God might pardon us; and at a greater, we will not imitate him: for, therefore, Christ hath suffered for us, saith the apostle, leaving an example to us, that we might follow his steps. The least of our wills cost Christ as much as the greatest of our sins. And, therefore, he calls himself the way, the truth, and the life: that as he redeems our souls from death to life by becoming life to our persons, so he is the truth to our understandings, and the way to our will and affections, enlightening that, and leading these in the paths of a happy eternity.

4. When the king of Moab was pressed hard by the sons of Isaac, (the Israelites and Edomites) he took the king of Edom's eldest son, or, as some think, his own son, the heir of his kingdom, and offered him as a holocaust upon the wall; and the Edomites presently raised the siege at Kir-haraseth, and went to their own country. The same and much more was God's design, who took not his enemy's, but his own Son, his only-begotten Son, and God himself, and offered him up in sacrifice, to make us leave our perpetual fightings against heaven: and if we still persist, we are hardened beyond the wildnesses of the Arabs and Edomites, and neither are receptive of the impresses of pity nor humanity, neither have compassion to the suffering of Jesus, nor compliance with the designs of God, nor conformity to the holiness and obedience of our guide. In a dark night, if an *ignis fatuus* do but precede us, the glaring of its lesser flames does so amuse our eyes, that we follow it into rivers and precipices, as if the ray of that false light were designed on purpose to be our path to tread in: and therefore not to follow the glories of the Sun of Righteousness, who indeed leads us over rocks and difficult places, but secures us against the danger, and guides us into safety, is the greatest undecency and unthankfulness in the world.

5. In the great council of eternity, when God set down the laws and knit fast the eternal bands of predestination, he made it one of his great purposes to make his Son like us, that we also might be like his holy Son; he, by taking our nature, we, by imitating his holiness: God hath predestinated us to be conformable to the image of his Son, (saith the apostle.) For the first in every kind is, in nature, propounded as the pattern of the rest: and as the sun, the prince of all the bodies of light, and the fire of all warm substances, is the principal, the rule and the copy which they, in their proportions, imitate and transcribe, so is the word incarnate the great example of all the predestinate; for he is the firstborn among many brethren. And therefore it was a precept of the apostle, and by his doctrine we understand its meaning, Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ. The similitude declares the duty. As a garment is composed and made of the same fashion with the body, and is applied to each part in its true figure and commensuration; so should we put on Christ, and imitate the whole body of his sanctity, conforming to every integral part, and express him in our lives; that God, seeing our impresses, may know whose image and superscription we bear, and we may be acknowledged for sons, when we have the air, and features, and resemblances of our elder brother.

6. In the practice of this duty we may be helped by certain considerations, which are like the proportion of so many rewards.* For

* "He who looks most frequently to Christ for the purpose of imitation, will also gather most from Him on which to prop his confidence, and that too on a right and evangelical basis. There is a pure line of concatenation in the processes of divine grace, by which a growing spiritual discernment is made to emerge out of a growing conformity to the will and to the image of the Saviour. 'He that keepeth my commandments, to him will I manifest myself.' He that giveth himself up to all righteousness is guided into all truth."—*Dr. Chalmers.*

this, according to the nature of all holy exercises, stays not for pay till its work be quite finished; but, like music in churches, is pleasure, and piety, and salary besides; so is every work of grace; full of pleasure in the execution, and thus abundantly rewarded, besides the stipend of a glorious eternity.

7. First, I consider that nothing is more honourable than to be like God; and the heathens, worshippers of false deities, grew vicious upon that stock; and we, who have fondnesses of imitation, counting a deformity full of honour, if by it we may be like our prince, (for pleasures were in their height in Caprea, because Tiberius there wallowed in them, and a wry neck in Nero's court was the mode of gallantry) might do well to make our imitations prudent and glorious, and, by propounding excellent examples, heighten our faculties to the capacities of an evenness with the best of precedents. He that strives to imitate another, admires him, and confesses his own imperfections: and therefore that our admirations be not flattering, nor our confessions phantastic and impertinent, it were but reasonable to admire Him from whom really all perfections do derive, and before whose glories all our imperfections must confess their shame, and need of reformation. God, by a voice from heaven, and by sixteen generations of miracles and grace, hath attested the holy Jesus to be the fountain of sanctity, and the wonderful counsellor, and the captain of our sufferings, and the guide of our manners, by being his beloved Son, in whom he took pleasure and complacency to the height of satisfaction: And if any thing in the world be motive of our affections, or satisfactory to our understandings, what is there in heaven or earth we can desire or imagine beyond a likeness to God, and participation of the divine nature and perfections? And therefore, as when the sun arises every man goes to his work and warms himself with

his heat, and is refreshed with his influences, and measures his labour with his course; so should we frame all the actions of our life by his light, who hath shined by an excellent righteousness, that we walk no more in darkness, or sleep in lethargies, or run agazing after the lesser and imperfect beauties of the night. It is the weakness of the organs, that makes us hold our hand between the sun and us, and yet stand staring upon a meteor or an inflamed jelly. And our judgments are as mistaken, and our appetites are as sottish, if we propound to ourselves, in the courses and designs of improvement, any copy but of him, or something like him, who is the most perfect. And lest we think his glories too great to behold,

8. Secondly, I consider that the imitation of the life of Jesus is a duty of that excellency and perfection, that we are helped in it, not only by the assistance of a good and a great example, which possibly might be too great, and scare our endeavours and attempts; but also by its easiness, compliance, and proportion to us. For Jesus in his whole life conversed with men with a modest virtue, which, like a well-kindled fire, fitted with just materials, casts out a constant heat; not like an inflamed heap of stubble, glaring with great emissions, and suddenly stooping into the thickness of smoke. His piety was even, constant, unblameable, complying with civil society, without affrightment of precedent, or prodigious instances of actions greater than the imitation of men. For if we observe our blessed Saviour in the whole story of his life, although he was without sin, yet the instances of his piety were the actions of a very holy, but of an ordinary life: and we may observe this difference in the story of Jesus from ecclesiastical writings of certain beatified persons, whose life is told rather to amaze us and to create scruples, than to lead us in the evenness and serenity of a holy conscience. Such are the prodigious

penances of Simeon Stylites, the abstinence of the religious retired into the mountain Nitria, but especially the stories of later saints in the midst of a declining piety and aged christendom, where persons are represented holy by way of idea and fancy, if not to promote the interests of a family or a monastic institution. But our blessed Saviour, though his eternal union and adherences of love and obedience to his heavenly Father were infinite, yet in his external actions, in which only, with the correspondence of the spirit in those actions, he propounds himself imitable, did so converse with men, that men after that example might for ever converse with him. We find that some saints have had excrescences and eruptions of holiness in the instances of uncommanded duties, which, in the same particulars, we find not in the story of the life of Jesus. John the Baptist was a greater mortifier than his Lord was; and some princes have given more money than all Christ's family did, whilst he was alive: but the difference, which is observable, is, that although some men did some acts of counsel, in order to attain that perfection which in Jesus was essential and unalterable, and was not acquired by degrees, and means of danger and difficulty, yet no man ever did his whole duty, save only the holy Jesus. The best of men did sometimes actions not precisely and strictly requisite, and such as were besides the precept; but yet, in the greatest flames of their shining piety, they prevaricated something of the commandment. They that have done the most things beyond, have also done some things short of their duty. But Jesus, who intended himself the example of piety, did in manners, as in the rule of faith, which, because it was propounded to all men, was fitted to every understanding; it was true, necessary, short, easy, and intelligible. So was his rule and his copy fitted, not only with excellences worthy, but with compliances possible to be imitated; of glories

so great, that the most early and constant industry must confess its own imperfections, and yet so sweet and human, that the greatest infirmity, if pious, shall find comfort and encouragement. Thus God gave his children manna from heaven; and though it was excellent like the food of angels, yet it conformed to every palate, according to that appetite which their several fancies and constitutions did produce.

9. But now when the example of Jesus is so excellent, that it allures and tempts with its facility and sweetness, and that we are not commanded to imitate a life whose story tells of ecstasies in prayer, and abstractions of senses, and immaterial transportations, and fastings to the exinanition of spirits, and disabling all animal operations; but a life of justice and temperance, of chastity and piety, of charity and devotion, such a life without which human society cannot be conserved, and by which, as our irregularities are made regular, so our weaknesses are not upbraided, nor our miseries made a mockery; we find so much reason to address ourselves to a heavenly imitation of so blessed a pattern, that the reasonableness of the thing will be a great argument to chide every degree and minute of neglect. It was a strange and a confident encouragement which Phocion used to a timorous Greek, who was condemned to die with him; "Is it not enough to thee, that thou must die with Phocion?" I am sure he that is most incurious of the issues of his life, is yet willing enough to reign with Jesus, when he looks upon the glories represented without the duty: but it is a very great stupidity and unreasonableness not to live with him in the imitation of so holy and so prompt a piety. It is glorious to do what he did, and a shame to decline his sufferings, when there was a God to hallow and sanctify the actions, and a man clothed with infirmity to undergo^{ed} the sharpness of the passion: so that the glory

of the person added excellency to the first, and the tenderness of the person excused not from suffering the latter.

10. Thirdly, Every action of the life of Jesus, as it is imitable by us, is of so excellent merit, that by making up the treasure of grace, it becomes full of assistances to us, and obtains of God grace to enable us to its imitation by way of influence and impetration. For as in the acquisition of habits, the very exercise of the action does produce a facility to the action, and in some proportion becomes the cause of itself; so does every exercise of the life of Christ kindle its own fires, inspires breath into itself, and makes an univocal production of itself in a differing subject. Jesus becomes the fountain of spiritual life to us, as the prophet Elisha to the dead child: when he stretched his hands upon the child's hands, laid his mouth to his mouth, and formed his posture to the boy, and breathed into him, the spirit returned again into the child, at the prayer of Elisha: so when our lives are formed into the imitation of the life of the holiest Jesus, the spirit of God returns into us, not only by the efficacy of the imitation, but by the merit and impetration of the actions of Jesus. It is reported in the Bohemian story, that St. Wenceslaus, their king, one winter night, going to his devotions, in a remote church, barefooted, in the snow, and sharpness of unequal and pointed ice, his servant, Podavivus, who waited upon his master's piety, and endeavoured to imitate his affections, began to faint through the violence of the snow and cold, till the king commanded him to follow him, and set his feet in the same footsteps which his feet should mark for him: the servant did so, and either fancied a cure, or found one; for he followed his prince, helped forward with shame and zeal to his imitation, and by the forming footsteps for him in the snow. In the same manner does the blessed Jesus: for since our way is troublesome, ob-

scure, full of objection and danger, apt to be mistaken and to affright our industry, he commands us to mark his footsteps, to tread where his feet have stood, and not only invites us forward by the argument of his example, but he hath trodden down much of the difficulty, and made the way easier and fit for our feet. For he knows our infirmities, and himself hath felt their experience in all things but in the neighbourhoods of sin: and therefore he hath proportioned a way and a path to our strength and capacities, and like Jacob, hath marched softly and in evenness with the children and the cattle, to entertain us by the comforts of his company, and the influences of a perpetual guide.

11. Fourthly, But we must know, that not every thing which Christ did is imitable by us, neither did he in the work of our redemption, in all things imitate his heavenly Father. For there are some things which are issues of an absolute power, some are expresses of supreme dominion, some are actions of a judge. And therefore Jesus prayed for his enemies, and wept over Jerusalem, when at the same instant his Eternal Father laughed them to scorn: for he knew that their day was coming, and himself had decreed their ruin. • But it became the holy Jesus to imitate his Father's mercies; for himself was the great instrument of the eternal compassion, and was the instance of mercy; and therefore in the operation of his Father's design every action of his was univocal, and he shewed the power of his divinity in nothing but in miracles of mercy, and illustrations of faith, by creating arguments of credibility. In the same proportion we follow Jesus as himself followed his father: for what he abated by the order of his intendment and design, we abate by the proportions of our nature: for some excellent acts of his were demonstrations of divinity, and an excellent grace poured forth upon him without measure, was their instru-

ment ; to which proportions, if we should try to extend our infirmities, we should crack our sinews, and dissolve the silver cords, before we could entertain the instances and support the burthen. Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights : but the manner of our fastings hath been in all ages limited to the term of an artificial day ; and in the primitive observations and the Jewish rites, men did eat their meal as soon as the stars shone in the firmament. We never read that Jesus laughed, and but once that he rejoiced in the spirit : but the declensions of our natures cannot bear the weight of a perpetual grave deportment, without the intervals of refreshment and free alacrity. Our ever-blessed Saviour suffered the devotion of Mary Magdalene to transport her to an expensive expression of her religion, and twice to anoint his feet with costly nard : and yet if persons whose conditions were of no greater lustre or resplendency of fortune than was conspicuous in his family and retinue, should suffer the same profusion upon the dressing and perfuming their bodies, possibly it might be truly said, " It might better be sold and distributed to the poor." This, Jesus received as he was the CHRIST and anointed of the Lord, and by this he suffered himself to be designed to burial, and he received the oblation as eucharistical for the ejection of seven devils ; for therefore she loved much.

12. The instances are not many. For however Jesus had some extraordinary transvolutions and acts of emigration beyond the lines of his even and ordinary conversation, yet it was but seldom : for his being exemplary was of so great consideration, that he chose to have fewer instances of wonder, that he might transmit the more of an imitable virtue. And therefore we may establish this for a rule and limit of our imitations : because Christ our lawgiver hath described all his Father's will in sanctions

and signature of laws ; whatsoever he commanded, and whatsoever he did of precise morality, or in pursuance of the laws of nature, in that we are to trace his footsteps : and in these, his laws and his practice differ but as a map and a guide, a law and a judge, a rule and a precedent. But in the special instances of action, we are to abate the circumstances, and to separate the obedience from the effect : whatsoever was moral in a ceremonial performance, that is highly imitable ; and the obedience of sacrificing, and the subordination to laws actually in being, even now they are abrogated, teach us our duty, in a differing subject upon the like reason. Jesus' going up to Jerusalem to the feasts, and his observation of the Sabbaths, teach us our duty in celebration of festivals constituted by a competent and just authority. For that which gave excellency to the observation of Mosical rites was an evangelical duty ; and the piety of obedience did not only consecrate the observations of Levi, but taught us our duty in the constitutions of Christianity.

13. Fifthly, As the holy Jesus did some things which we are not to imitate ; so we also are to do some things which we cannot learn from his example. For there are some of our duties which presuppose a state of sin, and some suppose a violent temptation and promptness to it ; and the duties of prevention and the instruments of restitution are proper to us, but conveyed only by precept, and not by precedent. Such are all the parts and actions of repentance, the duties of mortification and self-denial. For whatsoever the holy Jesus did in the matter of austerity, looked directly upon the work of our redemption, and looked back only on us by a reflex act, as Christ did on Peter when he looked him into repentance. Some states of life also there are which Jesus never led ; such are those of temporal government, kings and judges, merchants, lawyers, and the

state of marriage : in the course of which lives, many cases do occur which need a precedent, and the vivacity of an excellent example, especially since all the rules which they have, have not prevented the subtlety of the many inventions which men have found out, nor made provision for all contingencies. Such persons in all their special needs are to govern their actions by the rules of proportion, by analogy to the holiness of the person of Jesus, and the sanctity of his institution ; considering what might become a person professing the discipline of so holy a master, and what he would have done in the like case ; taking our heights by the excellency of his innocency and charity. Only remember this, that in such cases we must always judge on the strictest side of piety and charity, if it be a matter concerning the interest of a *second* person ; and that in all things we do those actions which are farthest removed from scandal, and such as towards ourselves are severe, towards others full of gentleness and sweetness. For so would the righteous and merciful Jesus have done ; these are the best analogies and proportions. And in such cases when the wells are dry, let us take water from a cistern, and propound to ourselves some exemplary saint, the necessities of whose life have determined his piety to the like occurrences.

14. But now from these particulars we shall best account to what the duty of the imitation of Jesus does amount : for it signifies, that we should walk as he walked, tread in his steps, with our hand upon the guide, and our eye upon his rule ; that we should do glory to him as he did to his father ; and that whatsoever we do, we should be careful that it do him honour, and no reproach to his institution ; and then account these to be the integral parts of our duty, which are imitation of his actions or his spirit, of his rule or of his life ; there being no better imitation of him than in such actions

as do him *pleasure*, however he hath expressed or imitated the precedent.

15. He that gives alms to the poor, takes Jesus by the hand ; he that patiently endures injuries and affronts, helps him to bear his cross ; he that comforts his brother in affliction, gives an amiable kiss of peace to Jesus ; he that bathes his own and his neighbour's sins in tears of penance and compassion, washes his master's feet : we lead Jesus into the recesses of our heart by holy meditations ; and we enter into his heart, when we express him in our actions : for so the apostle says, " He that is in Christ walks as he also walked." But thus the actions of our life relate to him by way of worship and religion ; but the use is admirable and effectual, when our actions refer him as to our *copy*, and we transcribe the original to the life. He that considers with what affections and lacerations of spirit, with what effusions of love Jesus prayed, what fervours and assiduity, what innocency of wish, what modesty of posture, what subordination to his father and conformity to the divine pleasure were in all his devotions, is taught and excited to holy and religious prayer. The rare sweetness of his deportment in all temptations and violences of his passion, his charity to his enemies, his sharp reprehensions to the Scribes and Pharisees, his ingenuousness toward all men, are living and effectual sermons to teach us patience and humility, and zeal and candid simplicity, and justice in all our actions. I add no more instances, because all the following discourses will be prosecutions of this intentment. And the life of Jesus is not described to be like a picture in a chamber of pleasure, only for beauty and entertainment of the eye : but like the Egyptian hieroglyphics, whose every feature is a precept, and the images converse with men by sense and signification of excellent discourses.

16. It was not without great reason advised,

that every man should propound the example of a wise and virtuous personage, as Cato, or Socrates, or Brutus; and by a fiction of imagination to suppose him present as a witness, and really to take his life as the direction of all our actions. The best and most excellent of the old lawgivers and philosophers among the Greeks had an alloy of viciousness, and could not be exemplary all over: some were noted for flatterers, as Plato and Aristippus; some for incontinency, as Aristotle, Epicurus, Zeno, Theognis, Plato and Aristippus again; and Socrates, whom their oracle affirmed to be the wisest and most perfect man, yet was by Porphyry noted for extreme intemperance of anger both in words and actions: and those Romans who were offered to them for examples, although they were in great reputation, yet they had also great vices; Brutus dipped his hand in the blood of Cæsar his prince, and his father by love, endearments and adoption; and Cato was but a wise man all day, at night he was used to drink too liberally; and both he and Socrates did give their wives unto their friends; the philosopher and the censor were procurers of their wives' unchastity: and yet these were the *best* among the Gentiles! But how happy and richly furnished are Christians with precedents of saints, whose faith and revelations have been productive of more spiritual graces, and greater degrees of moral perfections? And this I call the privilege of a very great assistance, that I might advance the reputation and account of the life of the glorious Jesu, which is not abated by the imperfections of human nature, as they were, but receives great heightnings and perfection from the divinity of his person, of which they were never capable.

17. Let us therefore press after Jesus, as Elisha did after his master, with an inseparable prosecution, even whithersoever he goes; that, according to the reasonableness and proportion

expressed in St. Paul's advice, "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we may also bear the image of the heavenly." For, in vain are we called Christians, if we live not according to the example and discipline of Christ the father of the institution. When St. Laurence was in the midst of the torments of the gridiron, he made this to be the matter of his joy and eucharist, that he was admitted to the gates through which Jesus had entered: and therefore thrice happy are they who walk in his courts all their days. And it is yet a nearer union and vicinity, to imprint his life in our souls, and express it in our exterior conduct: and this is done by him only who (as St. Prosper describes the duty) despises all those gilded vanities which He despised, that fears none of those sadnesses which He suffered, that practises or also teaches those doctrines which He taught, and hopes for the accomplishment of all His promises. And this is truest religion, and the most solemn adoration.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal, holy, and most glorious Jesu, who hast united two natures of distance infinite, descending to the lownesses of human nature, that thou mightest exalt human nature to a participation of the divinity; we thy people that sat in darkness and in the shadows of death, have seen great light, to entertain our understandings and enlighten our souls with its excellent influences; for the excellence of thy sanctity, shining gloriously in every part of thy life, is like thy angel, the pillar of fire which called thy children from the darknesses of Egypt. Lord, open mine eyes, and give me power to behold thy righteous glories, and

let my soul be so entertained with affections and holy ardours, that I may never look back upon the flames of Sodom, but may follow thy light, which recreates and enlightens, and guides us to the mountains of safety; and sanctuaries of holiness. Holy Jesu, since thy image is imprinted on our nature by creation, let me also express thy image by all the parts of a holy life, conforming my will and affections to thy holy precepts, submitting my understanding to thy dictates and lessons of perfection; imitating thy sweetnesses and excel-

lences of society, thy devotion in prayer, thy conformity to God, thy zeal tempered with meekness, thy patience heightened with charity; that heart, and hands, and eyes, and all my faculties may grow up with the increase of God, till I come to the full measure of the stature of Christ, even to be a perfect man in Christ Jesus; that at last in thy light I may see light, and reap the fruits of glory from the seeds of sanctity in the imitation of thy holy life, O blessed and holy Saviour Jesus.

THE LIFE

OF OUR BLESSED

LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

SECTION I.

THE HISTORY OF THE CONCEPTION OF JESUS.

1. WHEN the fulness of time was come, after the frequent repetition of promises, the expectation of the Jewish nation, the longings and tedious waitings of all holy persons, the departure of the sceptre from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet: when the number of Daniel's years was accomplished, and the Egyptian and Syrian kingdoms had their period, God, having great compassion towards mankind, remembering his promises and our great necessities, sent his Son into the world to take upon him our nature, and all that guilt of sin which stuck close to our nature, and all that punishment which was consequent to our sin: which came to pass after this manner.

2. In the days of Herod the king, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a holy maid called Mary, espoused to Joseph; and found her in a capacity and excellent disposition to receive the greatest honour that ever was done to the daughters of men. Her employment was holy and pious, her person young, her years florid and springing, her body chaste, her mind

humble, and a rare repository of divine graces. She was full of graces and excellences. And God poured upon her a full measure of honour, in making her the mother of the Messiah. For the angel came to her, and said, "Hail thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee. blessed art thou among women."

3. We cannot but imagine the great mixture of innocent disturbances and holy passions that, in the first address of the angel, did rather discompose her settledness, and interrupt the silence of her spirits, than dispossess her dominion which she ever kept over those subjects which never had been taught to stray beyond the mere possibilities of natural imperfection. But if the angel appeared in the shape of a man, it was an unusual arrest to the blessed virgin, who was accustomed to retirements and solitariness, and had not known an experience of admitting a comely person, but a stranger, to her closet and privacies. But if the heavenly messenger did retain a diviner form, more symbolical to angelical nature, and more proportionable to his glorious message, although her daily employment was a conversation with

angels, who in their daily ministering to the saints did behold her chaste conversation coupled with fear, yet they used not any affrighting glories in the offices of their daily attendances, but were seen only by spiritual discernings. However, so it happened, that "When she saw him she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be."

4. But the angel, who came with designs of honour and comfort to her, not willing that the inequality and glory of the messenger should, like too glorious a light to a weak eye, rather confound the faculty than enlighten the organ, did, before her thoughts could find a tongue, invite her to a more familiar confidence than possibly a tender virgin (though of the greatest serenity and composure) could have put on in the presence of such a beauty and such a holiness. And the angel said unto her, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS."

5. The holy virgin knew herself a person very unlikely to be a mother: for although the desires of becoming a mother to the Messiah were great in all of the daughters of Jacob, and about that time the expectation of his revelation was high and pregnant, and therefore she was espoused to an honest and a just person of her kindred and family, and so might not despair to become a mother; yet she was a person of a rare sanctity and so mortified a spirit, that for all this betrothment of her, according to the desire of her parents, and the custom of the nation, she had not set one step toward the consummation of her marriage, so much as in thought; and possibly had set herself back from it by a vow of chastity and holy cœlibate. For Mary said unto the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

6. But the angel, who was a person of that nature which knows no conjunctions but those of love and duty, knew that the piety of her soul and the religion of her chaste purposes was a great imitator of angelical purity, and therefore perceived wherein the philosophy of her question did consist; and being taught of God, declared, that the manner should be as miraculous as the message itself was glorious. For the angel told her, that this should not be done by any way which our sin and the shame of Adam had unhallowed, by turning nature into a blush, and forcing her to a retirement from a public attesting the means of her own preservation; but as the whole matter was from God, and so should the manner be: for the angel said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

7. When the blessed virgin was so assured that she should be a mother and a maid, and that two glories, like the two luminaries of heaven, should meet in her, that she might in such a way become the mother of her Lord, that she might with better advantages be his servant; then all her hopes and all her desires received such satisfaction, and filled all the corners of her heart so much, as indeed it was fain to make room for its reception. But she to whom the greatest things of religion, and the transportations of devotion, were made familiar by the assiduity and piety of her daily practices; however she was full of joy, yet she was carried like a full vessel, without the violent tossings of a tempestuous passion, or the wrecks of a stormy imagination. And as the power of the Holy Ghost did descend upon her like rain into a fleece of wool, so her spirit received it with the gentleness and tranquillity fitted for the entertainment of the spirit of love, and with a quietness symbolical to such a holy

guest as the Lamb of God; for she meekly replied, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according unto thy word. And the angel departed from her," having done his message. And at the same time the holy spirit of God did make her conceive the immaculate Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

Reflections upon the Annunciation and the Conception.

1. That which shines brightest presents itself first to the eye; and the devout soul, in the chain of excellent and precious things which are represented in the counsel, design, and first beginnings of the work of our redemption, hath not leisure to attend the twinkling of the lesser stars, till it hath stood and admired the glory and eminences of divine love, manifested in the incarnation of the word eternal. God, who had no necessity, in order to the conservation or the heightening his own felicity, but out of mere and perfect charity and the bowels of compassion, sent into the world his only Son, for remedy to human miseries, to ennoble our nature by an union with divinity, to sanctify it with his justice, to enrich it with his grace, to instruct it with his doctrine, to fortify it with his example, to rescue it from servitude, to assert it into the liberty of the sons of God, and at last to make it partaker of a beatifical resurrection.

2. God, who in the infinite treasures of his wisdom and providence, could have found out many* other ways for our redemption than the

incarnation of his Eternal Son, was pleased to choose this, not only that the remedy by man might have proportion to the causes of our ruin, whose introduction and intromission was by the prevarication of man; but also that we might with freer dispensation receive the influences of a Saviour with whom we communicate in nature. Thus, although Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, were of greater name and current, yet they were not so salutary as the waters of Jordan to cure Naaman's leprosy. And, if God had made the remedy of human nature to have come, all the way, clothed in prodigy; and if every instant of its execution had been as terrible, affrighting, and as full of majesty as the apparitions upon mount Sinai; yet, it had not been so useful and complying to human necessities, as was the descent of God to the susception of human nature, whereby (as in all medicaments) the cure is best wrought by those instruments which have the fewest dissonancies to our temper, and are the nearest to our constitution. For thus the Saviour of the world became human, alluring, full of invitation and the sweetnesses of love: exemplary, humble and medicinal.

3. And if we consider the reasonableness of the thing, what can be given more excellent for the redemption of man, than the blood of the Son of God? And what can more ennoble our nature than, that, by the means of his holy humanity, it was taken up into the cabinet of the mysterious Trinity? What better advocate could we have for us, than he that is appointed to be our judge? And what greater hopes of reconciliation can be imagined, than that God, in whose power it is to give an absolute pardon, hath taken a new nature, entertained an office, and undergone a life of poverty, with a purpose to procure our pardon? For now, though as the righteous judge he will judge the nations righteously, yet by the susception of our nature, and its appendant crimes, he is become a

* If this compliment to omnipotence were not well meant, it would be a *reflection* on the paternal character of God. He would have "spared his Son," if he could have spared us, by any other means which omniscience could devise, or omnipotence create. Christ put the possibility of other means to the test, when he prayed, "*If it be possible let this cup pass from me.*"—ED.

party: and having obliged himself as man, as God he will satisfy, by putting the value of an infinite merit to the actions and sufferings of his humanity. And if he had not been God, he could not have given us remedy; if he had not been man, we should have wanted the excellency of example.

4. And till now human nature was less than that of angels; but by the incarnation of the word, it was to be exalted above the cherubim; yet the archangel Gabriel being dispatched in embassy, to represent the joy and exaltation of his inferior, instantly trims his wings with love and obedience, and hastens with this narrative to the holy virgin. And if we would reduce our prayers to action, and do God's will on earth as the angels in heaven do it, we should promptly execute every part of the divine will, though it were to be instrumental to the exaltation of a brother above ourselves; knowing no end but conformity to the divine will, and making simplicity of intention to be the fringes and exterior borders of our garments.

5. When the eternal God meant to stoop so low as to be fixed to our centre, he chose for his mother a holy person and a maid; but yet affianced to a just man, that he might not only be secure in the innocency, but also provided for in the reputation of his holy mother: teaching us, that we must not only satisfy ourselves in the purity of our purposes and hearty innocence; but that we must provide also things honest in the sight of all men; being free from the suspicion and semblances of evil; so making provision for private innocence and public honesty; it being necessary, in order to charity and edification of our brethren, that we hold forth no impure flames or smoking firebrands, but pure and trimmed lamps, in the eyes of all the world.

6. And yet her marriage was more mysterious for us, besides the miracle, it was an

eternal honour and advancement to the glory of virginity, that he chose a virgin for his mother; so it was, in that manner, attempered that the virgin was betrothed; lest honourable marriage might be disreputed and seem inglorious, by a positive rejection from any participation of the honour. Divers of the old doctors, from the authority of Ignatius add another reason, saying, that the blessed Jesus was therefore born of a woman betrothed, and under the pretence of marriage, that the devil, who knew the Messiah was to be born of a virgin, might not expect him there; but so be ignorant of the person, till God had served many ends of providence upon him.

7. The angel in his address needed not to go in inquisition after a wandering fire; but knew she was a star fixed in her own orb: he found her at home; and, lest that also might be too large a circuit, she was yet confined to a more intimate retirement: she was in her oratory private and devout. There are some Fathers so bold and determinate, as to tell the very matter of her prayer, and that she was praying for the salvation of all the world, and the revelation of the Messiah; desiring she might be so happy as to kiss the feet of her who should have the glory to be his mother. We have no security of the tradition: but there is no piety so diffident as to require a sign, to create a belief that her employment, at the instant, was holy and religious. But in that disposition, she received a grace which the greatest queens would have purchased with the quitting of their diadems; and hath consigned an excellent document to all women, that they accustom themselves often to those retirements where none but God and his angels can have admittance. For the holy Jesus can come to them too, and dwell with them, hallowing their soul, and consigning their bodies to a participation of all his glories. But recollecting of all our scattered thoughts and

exterior extravagances, and a receding from the inconveniences of a too free conversation, is the best circumstance to dispose us to a heavenly visitation.

8. The holy virgin, when she saw an angel, and heard a testimony from heaven of her grace and piety, was troubled within herself at the salutation and the manner of it. For she had learned, that the affluence of divine comforts and prosperous successes, should not exempt us from fear: but make us the more prudent and wary, lest it entangle us in a vanity of spirit: God having ordered, that our spirits should be affected with dispositions in some degrees contrary to exterior events, that we may be fearful in the affluence of prosperous things, and joyful in adversity; as knowing that this may produce benefit and advantage; for the changes that are consequent to the other, are sometimes full of mischiefs, and always of danger. But her silence and fear were her guardians; that, to prevent excrescences of joy; this, of vain complacency.

9. And it is not altogether inconsiderable to observe, that the holy virgin came to a great perfection and state of piety by a few, and those modest and even, exercises and external actions. St. Paul travelled over the world, preached to the Gentiles, disputed against the Jews, confounded heretics, writ excellently-learned letters, suffered dangers, injuries, affronts, and persecutions, to the height of wonder; and by these violences of life, actions, and patience, obtained the crown of an excellent religion and devotion. But the holy virgin, although she was engaged sometimes in an active life, and in the exercise of an ordinary and small economy and government, or ministeries of a family, yet she arrived to her perfections by the means of a quiet and silent piety, or the internal actions of love, devotion, and contemplation: and this instructs us, that not only those who have opportunity and powers of a magnificent reli-

gion, or a pompous charity, or miraculous conversion of souls, or assiduous and effectual preachings, or exterior demonstrations of corporal mercy, shall have the greatest crowns, and the addition of degrees and accidental rewards; but the silent affections, and splendours of an internal devotion, the unions of love, humility, and obedience, the daily offices of prayer and praises sung to God, the acts of faith and fear, of patience and meekness, of hope and reverence, repentance and charity, and those graces which walk in a veil and silence, make great ascents to God, and assure progress to favour and a crown as the more ostentatious and labourious exercises of a more solemn religion. No man needs to complain of want of power or opportunities for religious perfections: a devout woman in her closet, praying with much zeal and affection for the conversion of souls, is, in the same order, to a shining like the stars in glory, as he who by excellent discourses puts it into a more forward disposition to be actually performed. And possibly *her* prayers obtained energy and force to my sermon, and made the ground fruitful, and the seed spring up to life eternal. Many times God is present in the still voice and private retirements of a quiet religion, and the constant spiritualities of an ordinary life, when the loud and impetuous winds, and the shining fires of more labourious and expensive actions, are profitable to others only, like a tree of balsam, distilling precious liquor for others, not for its own use.

THE PRAYER.

O Eternal and Almighty God, who didst send thy holy angel in embassy to the blessed

virgin mother of our Lord, to manifest the actuating thine eternal purpose of the redemption of mankind by the incarnation of thine eternal Son ; put me, by the assistances of thy divine grace, into such holy dispositions, that I may never impede the event and effect of those mercies which in the counsels of thy predestination thou didst design for me. Give me a promptness to obey thee, to the degree and semblance of angelical alacrity ; give me holy purity and piety, prudence and modesty, like those excellences which thou didst create in the ever-blessed virgin, the mother of God :

grant that my employment be always holy, unmixed with worldly affections, and, as much as my condition of life will bear, retired from secular interests and disturbances ; that I may converse with angels, entertain the holy Jesus, conceive him in my soul, nourish him with the expressions of most innocent and holy affections, and bring him forth and publish him in a life of piety and obedience ; that he may dwell in me for ever, and I may for ever dwell with him, in the house of eternal pleasures and glories, world without end. Amen.

SECTION II.

1. **ALTHOUGH** the blessed virgin had a faith as prompt and ready as her body was chaste and her soul pure, yet God, who uses to give full measure, shaken together, and running over, did, by way of confirmation and fixing the confidence of her assent, give an instance of his omnipotency, in the very particular of an extraordinary conception: for the angel said, "Behold thy cousin Elizabeth hath also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren: for with God nothing shall be impossible." A less argument would have satisfied the necessity of a faith which had no scruple; and a greater would not have done it, in the incredulity of an ungente and pertinacious spirit. But the holy maid had complacency enough in the message, and holy desires about her, to carry her understanding as far as her affections; even to the fruition of an angel's message; which is such a sublimity of faith, that it is its utmost consummation, and shall be its crown when our faith is turned into vision, our hopes into actual possessions, and our grace into glory.

2. And she, who was now full of God, and of the Holy Spirit in her heart, who had also overshadowed her, enabling her to a supernatural and miraculous conception, arose with haste and gladness, to communicate that joy which was designed for all the world; and she found no breast to pour forth the first emanations of her overjoyed heart, so fit as her cousin Elizabeth's; who had received testimony from God to have been righteous, "walking in all the commandments of the Lord blame-

less;' who also had a special portion in this great honour; for she was designed to be the mother of the Baptist, who was sent as a forerunner, "To prepare the ways of the Lord, and to make his paths straight. And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste into a city of Judah."

3. Her haste was in proportion to her joy and desires; but yet went no greater pace than her religion: for, as in her journey she came near to Jerusalem, she turned in, that she might visit His temple, whose temple she herself was now; and there, not only to remember the pleasures of religion, which she had felt in continual descents and showers falling on her pious heart for the space of eleven years attendance there in her childhood; but also to pay the firstfruits of her thanks and joy, and to lay all her glory at his feet, whose humble handmaid she was, in the greatest honour of being his blessed mother. Having worshipped, she went on her journey, "And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth."

4. It is not easy to imagine what a collision of joys was at this blessed meeting: two mothers of two great princes, the one the greatest that was born of woman, and the other was his Lord; and these, made mothers by two miracles, met together with joy and mysteriousness; where the mother of our Lord went to visit the mother of his servant, and the Holy Ghost made the meeting festival, and descended upon Elizabeth, and she prophesied. Never, but in heaven, was there more joy and

ecstasy. The persons, who were women whose fancies and affections were not only hallowed, but made pregnant with religion, meeting together to compare and unite their joys, and their eucharist, and then made prophetic and inspired, must needs have discoursed like seraphim, and the most ecstasied order of intelligences; for all the faculties of nature were turned into grace, and expressed in their way the excellent solemnity. "For it came to pass when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost."

5. After they had both prophesied and sang their hymns, and resaluted each other with the religion of saints and the joys of angels, Mary abode with her cousin Elizabeth about three months, and then returned to her own house; where, when she appeared with her holy burden to her husband Joseph, he was troubled. For although her deportment had been pious and chaste to a miracle, her carriage reserved, and so grave, that she drove away temptations and impure visits and all unclean purposes from the neighbourhood of her holy person, yet when he saw she was with child, and as he had not yet been taught a lesson higher than the principles of nature, "he was minded to put her away," but yet privily; because he was a good man, and knew her piety to have been such, that it had almost done violence to his sense, and made him disbelieve what was visible and notorious; and therefore he would do it privately. "But as he thought on these things, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife."

Reflections on the Interval between the Conception and Nativity.

1. When the blessed virgin was ascertained of the manner of her becoming a mother, and when her tremblings were over upon the security she should preserve her virgin purity as a clean oblation to the honour of God, then she expressed her consent to the angelical message, and instantly she conceived the Holy Jesus in her womb, by the supernatural and divine influence of the Holy Ghost. For she was highly zealous to reconcile her being mother to the Messiah with those purities and holy celibate which she had designed to keep as advantages to the interests of religion, and to his honour who chose her from all the daughters of Adam, to be instrumental of the restitution of grace and innocence to all her father's family. And we shall receive benefit from so excellent example, if we be not so desirous of a privilege as of a virtue, of honour as of piety: and as we submit to the weight and pressure of sadnesses and infelicities, that God's will may be accomplished, so we must be also ready to renounce an exterior grace or favour, rather than it should not be consistent with exemplary and rare piety.

2. When the Son of God was incarnate within his virgin mother, the holy maid arose; and though she was super-exalted by an honour greater than the world yet ever saw, she still dwelt upon the foundation of humility; and to make that virtue more signal and eminent, she arose and went hastily to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who also had conceived a son in her old age: for so we all should be curious and watchful against vanities and transportations, when we are advanced to the joy of prosperous accidents; and, in the greatest privileges descend to the lowest, to exercise a greater measure of virtue against the danger of those tempta-

tions which are planted against our heart, to ruin our hopes and glories.

3. But the joys that the virgin mother had, were such as concerned all the world; and that part of them which was her peculiar, she would not conceal from persons apt to their entertainment, but went to publish God's mercy toward herself, to another holy person, that they might join in the praises of God; as knowing, that though it may be convenient to represent our personal necessities in private, yet God's gracious returns and the blessings he makes to descend on us are more fit, when there is no personal danger collaterally appendant, to be published in the communion of saints; that the hopes of others may receive increase, that their faith may have confirmation, that their charity and eucharist may grow up to become excellent and great, and the praises of God may be sung aloud, till the sound strike at heaven, and join with the hallelujahs which the morning stars in their orbs pay to their great Creator.

4. When the holy virgin had begun her journey, she made haste over the mountains, that she might not only satisfy the desires of her joy by a speedy gratulation, but lest she should be too long abroad under the dispersion and discomposing of her retirements: and therefore she hastens to an inclosure, to her cousin's house, as knowing that all virtuous women, like tortoises, carry their house on their heads, and their chapel in their heart, and their danger in their eye, and their souls in their hands, and God in all their actions. And indeed her very little burthen which she bare hindered her not, but that she might make haste enough; and as her spirit was full of cheerfulness and alacrity, so even her body was made vigorous: for there was no sin in her burthen to fill it with natural inconveniences: and there is this excellency in all spiritual things, that they do no disadvantage to our persons,

nor retard our just temporal interests. And the religion by which we carry Christ within us, is neither so peevish as to disturb our health, nor so sad as to discompose our just and modest cheerfulness, nor so prodigal as to force us to needs and ignoble trades; but recreates our body by the medicine of holy fastings and temperance, fills us full of serenities and complacencies by the sweetnesses of a holy conscience and spiritual joys, promotes our temporal interests by the gains and increases of the rewards of charity, and by securing God's providence over us while we are in the pursuit of the heavenly kingdom. And as in these dispositions *She* climbed the mountains with much facility; so there is nothing in our whole life of difficulty so great but it may be managed by those assistances we receive from the Holy Jesus, when we carry him about us; as the valleys are exalted, so the mountains are made plain before us.

5. When her cousin Elizabeth saw the mother of her Lord come to visit her (as the Lord himself descended to visit all the world in great humility,) she was pleased and transported to the height of wonder and prophecy; and the babe sprang in her womb and was sanctified, first doing his homage and adoration to his Lord that was in presence. And we also, although we can do nothing unless the Lord first present us with his gracious visitation, yet if he first come unto us, and we accept and entertain him with the expressions and correspondences of our duty, we shall receive the grace and honour of sanctification. But if Elizabeth, who received testimony from God, that she "walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless," was carried into ecstasy, wondering at the honour and favour done to her by the mother of her Lord, with what preparations and holy solemnities ought we to entertain his addresses to us by his holy sacrament, by the immissions of his Spirit, by the

assurances of his graces, and all other his vouchsafings and descents into our hearts?

6. The blessed virgin hearing her cousin, full of the spirit and prophecy, calling her blessed, and praising her faith, and confirming her joy, instantly sang her hymn to God, returning those praises which she received, to him to whom they did appertain. For so we should worship God with all our praises, being willing upon no other condition to extend one hand to receive our own honour, but that with the other we might transmit it to God; that as God is honoured in all his creatures, so he may be honoured in us too; looking upon the graces which God hath given us, but as greater instruments and abilities to serve him; being none of ours, but talents which are intrusted into our hands to be improved. But as a precious pearl is orient and medicinal, because God hath placed those excellences in it for ends of his own, but itself is dead to all apprehensions of this, and knows no reflections upon its own value; only God is magnified in his work; so is every pious person precious and holy; but mortified to all vainer complacencies in those singularities and eminences which God placed there because he was so pleased, saying, There he would have a temple built; because from thence he would take delight to receive glory and adoration.

7. After all these holy and festival joys which the two glad mothers feasted themselves withal, a sad cloud did intervene and passed before the face of the blessed virgin. The just and righteous Joseph, her espoused husband,* perceiving her to be with child, was minded to put her away, as not knowing the divinity of the fountain which watered the virgin's sealed and hallowed womb, and made it fruitful. But

he purposed to do it privily, that he might preserve the reputation of his spouse, whose piety he knew was great; and was sorrowful it should now set in a sad night and be extinct. But it was an exemplary charity, and reads to us a rule for our deportment towards erring and lapsed persons, that we intreat them with meekness, and pity, and fear; not hastening their shame, nor provoking their spirit, nor making their remedy desperate by using of them rudely, till there be no worse thing for them to fear, if they should be dissolved into all licentiousness. For an open shame is commonly protested unto, when it is remediless, and the person either despairs and sinks under the burthen, or else grows impudent and tramples upon it. But the gentleness of a modest and charitable remedy preserves that which is virtue's girdle—fear and blushing; and the beginning of a punishment chides them into the horror of remembrance and guilt, but preserves their meekness and modesty; because they, not feeling the worst of evils, dare not venture upon the worst of sins.

8. But it seems the blessed virgin, having received this greatest honour, had not made it known to her husband Joseph; and when she went to her cousin Elizabeth, the virgin was told of it by her cousin before she spake of it herself; for her cousin had it by revelation and the spirit of prophecy. And it is in some circumstances, and from some persons, more secure to conceal visions, and those heavenly gifts which create estimations among men, than to publish them, which may possibly minister to vanity; and those exterior graces may do God's work, though no observer note them but the person for whose sake they are sent; like rain falling in uninhabited valleys, where no eye observes showers; yet the valleys laugh and sing to God in their refreshment without a witness. However, it is better to hear the report of our good things from the mouths of others than from ourselves; and better yet, if

* Among the Jews, the espousal was considered perfectly legal and binding on both sides, and hence a breach of this contract was punished exactly in the same way as adultery. See *Seldeni's Uxor Hebraica*, and *Dr. Clarke*.—Ed.

the beauty of the tabernacle be covered with skins, that none of our beauties be seen but by worshippers; that is, when the glory of God and the interests of religion or charity are concerned in their publication. For so it happened to be in the case of the blessed virgin, as she related to her cousin Elizabeth; and so it happened not to be, as she referred to her husband Joseph.

9. The holy virgin could not but know that Joseph would be troubled with sorrow and insecure apprehensions concerning her; but such was her innocence and her confidence in God, that she held her peace, expecting which way God would provide a remedy to the inconvenience; and if we commit ourselves to God in well doing as unto a faithful Creator, preserving the tranquillity of our spirits and the evenness of our temper in the assault of infamy and disreputation; God, who loves our innocence, will be its patron, and will assert it from the scandal, if it be expedient for us; if it be not, it is not fit we should desire it. But if the holy Jesus did suffer his mother to fall into misinterpretation and suspicion, which could not but be a great affliction to her excellent spirit, rarely tempered as an eye, highly sensible of every ruder touch; we must not think it strange, if we be tried and pressed with a calamity and unhandsome accidents: only remember, that God will find a remedy to the trouble, and will sanctify the affliction, and secure the person, if we be innocent, as was the holy virgin.

10. But Joseph was not hasty in the execution of his purposes, nor of making his thoughts determinate; but stood long in deliberation, and longer before he acted it, because it was an invidious matter, and a rigour. He was first to have defamed and accused her publicly, and, being convicted by the law, she was to die, if he had gone the ordinary way; but he who was a just man, that is, according to the style of Scripture and other wise writers, a good, a

charitable man, found that it was more agreeable to justice, to treat an offending person with the easiest sentence, than to put things to extremity, and render the person desperate and without remedy, or provoked by the suffering of the worst of what she could fear. No obligation to justice does force a man to be cruel, or to use the sharpest sentence. A just man does justice to every man and to every thing; and then, if he be also wise, he knows there is a debt of mercy and compassion due to the infirmities of a man's nature, and that debt is to be paid; and he that is cruel and ungentle to a sinning person, and does the worst thing to him, dies in his debt, and is unjust. Pity, and forbearance, and long-suffering, and fair interpretation, and excusing our brother, and taking things in the best sense, and passing the gentlest sentence, are as certainly our duty, and owing to every person that does offend and can repent, as calling men to account can be owing to the law, and are first to be paid; and he that does not so is an unjust person; which, because Joseph was not, he did not call furiously for justice, or pretend that God required it at his hands presently, to undo a suspected person; but waved the killing letter of the law, and secured his own interest and his justice too, by intending to dismiss her privately. But before the thing was irremediable, God ended his question by a heavenly demonstration, and sent an angel to reveal to him the innocence of his spouse, and the divinity of her son, and that he was an immediate derivative from heaven, and the heir of all the world. And in all our doubts we shall have a resolution from heaven or some of its ministers, if we have recourse thither for a guide, and be not hasty in our discourses, or inconsiderate in our purposes, or rash in judgment. For God loves to give assistance to us, when we most fairly and prudently endeavour that grace be not put to do all our work, but to facilitate our labour; not creating new faculties,

but improving those of nature. If we consider warily, God will guide us in the determination ; but a hasty person outruns his guide, prevaricates his rule, and very often engages upon error.

THE PRAYER.

1. O holy Jesus, Son of the eternal God, thy glory is far above all heavens, and yet thou didst descend to earth, that thy descent might be the more gracious, by how much thy glories were admirable, and natural, and inseparable. I adore thy holy humanity with humble veneration, and the thankful addresses of religious joy, because thou hast personally united human nature to the eternal word, carrying it above the seats of the highest cherubim. This great and glorious mystery is the honour and glory of man ; it was the expectation of our fathers, who saw the mysteriousness of thy incarnation at great and obscure distances. And blessed be thy name, that thou hast caused me to be born after the fulfilling of thy prophecies, and the consummation and exhibition of so great a love, so great mysteriousness. Holy Jesus, though I admire and adore the immensity of thy love and condescension, who wert pleased to undergo our burthens and infirmities for us ; yet I abhor myself and detest my own impurities, which

were so great and contradictory to the excellency of God, that to destroy sin, and save us, it became necessary that thou shouldest be sent into the world to die our death for us, and to give us of thy life.

2. Dearest Jesus, thou didst not breathe one sigh, nor shed one drop of blood, nor weep one tear, nor suffer one stripe, nor preach one sermon for the salvation of the devils ; and what sadness and shame is it, then, that I should cause so many insufferable loads of sorrows to fall upon thy sacred head ? Thou art wholly given for me, wholly spent upon my uses, and wholly for every one of the elect. Thou, in the beginning of the work of our redemption, didst suffer nine months imprisonment in the pure womb of thy holy mother, to redeem me from the eternal servitude of sin and its miserable consequents. Holy Jesu, let me be born anew, receive a new birth and a new life, imitating thy graces and excellences, by which thou art beloved of thy Father, and hast obtained for us a favour and atonement. Let thy holy will be done by me, let all thy will be wrought in me, let thy will be wrought concerning me ; that I may do thy pleasure, and submit to the dispensation of thy providence, and conform to thy holy will, and may for ever serve thee in the communion of saints, in the society of thy redeemed ones, now and in the glories of eternity. Amen.

SECTION III.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR JESUS.

1. THE holy maid longed to be a glad mother, and she who carried a burthen whose proper commensuration is the days of eternity, counted the tedious minutes, expecting when the Sun of Righteousness should break forth from his bed, where nine months he hid himself as behind a fruitful cloud. About the same time, God, who in his infinite wisdom does concentrate and tie together in one end things of different and disproportionate natures, making things improbable to co-operate to what wonder or to what truth he pleases, brought the holy virgin to Bethlehem, the city of David, to be taxed with her husband Joseph, according to a decree upon all the world, issuing from Augustus Cæsar. But this happened in this conjunction of time, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Micah, "And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel." This rare act of providence was highly remarkable, because this taxing seems wholly to have been ordered by God to serve and minister to the circumstances of this birth. For this taxing was not in order to tribute. Herod was now king, and received all the revenues of the fiscus, and paid to Augustus an appointed tribute after the manner of other kings, friends, and relatives of the Roman empire: neither doth it appear that the Romans laid a new tribute on the Jews before the confiscation of the goods of Archelaus. Augustus, therefore, sending special delegates to tax every city, made only an inquest after the strength of

the Roman empire in men and monies, and did himself no other advantage, but was directed by Him who rules and turns the hearts of princes. that he might, by verifying a prophecy, signify and publish the divinity of the mission and the birth of Jesus.

2. She that had conceived by the operation of that Spirit who dwells within the element of love, was no way impeded in her journey by the greatness of her burthen, but arrived at Bethlehem in the throng of strangers, who had so filled up the places of hospitality and public entertainment, that there was no room for Joseph and Mary in the inn. But yet she felt that it was necessary to retire where she might softly lay her burthen, who began now to call at the gates of his prison, and nature was ready to let him forth. But she that was mother to the King of all the creatures, could find no other but a stable, a cave of a rock, whither she retired; where, when it began to be with her after the manner of women, she humbly bowed her knees in the posture and guise of worshippers, and in the midst of glorious thoughts and highest speculation brought forth her firstborn into the world.

3. As there was no sin in the conception, so neither had she pains in the production, as the church from the days of Gregory Nazianzen until now hath piously believed: though before his days there were some opinions to the contrary, but certainly neither so pious, nor so reasonable. For to her alone did not the punishment of Eve extend, that in sorrow she should bring forth. For where nothing of sin



was an ingredient, there misery cannot cohabit. For though amongst the daughters of men many conceptions are innocent and holy, being sanctified by the word of God and prayer, hallowed by marriage, designed by prudence, seasoned by temperance, conducted by religion, towards a just, a hallowed, and a holy end, and yet their productions are in sorrow; yet this of the blessed virgin might be otherwise, because here sin was no relative, and neither was in the principle nor the derivative, in the act nor in the habit, in the root nor in the branch; there was nothing in this, but the sanctification of a virgin's womb, and that could not be the parent of sorrow. And as to conceive by the Holy Ghost was glorious, so to bring forth any of the fruits of the spirit is joyful, and full of felicities. And he that came from his grave fast tied with a stone and signature, and into the college of apostles, the doors being shut, and into the glories of his Father through the solid orbs of all the firmament, came also (as the church piously believes) into the world so, without doing violence to the virginal and pure body of his mother, that he did also leave her virginity entire, to be as a seal; that none might open the gate of that sanctuary, but that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, "This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord God of Israel hath entered by it, therefore it shall be shut."

4. Although all the world were concerned in the birth of this great prince, yet I find no story of any one that ministered at it save only angels, who knew their duty to their Lord, and the great interests of that person, whom, as soon as he was born, they presented to his mother, who could not but receive him with a joy next to the rejoicings of glory and beatific vision,* seeing him to be born her son who was the Son of God, of greater beauty than the sun,

purser than angels, more loving than the seraphim, as dear as the eye and heart of God, where he was from eternity engraven, his beloved and his only-begotten.

5. When the virgin mother now felt the tenderness and yearnings of a mother's bowels, and saw the Saviour of the world born, poor as her fortunes could represent him, naked as the innocence of Adam, she took him, and wrapt him in swaddling clothes; and after she had a while cradled him in her arms, she laid him in a manger: for so was the design of his humility; that as the last scene of his life was represented among thieves, so the first was amongst beasts, the sheep and the oxen; according to that mysterious hymn of the prophet Habakkuk, "His brightness was as the light, he had horns coming out of his hand, and there was a hiding of his power."

6. But this place, which was one of the great instances of his humility, grew to be as venerable as became an instrument, and it was consecrated into a church, the crib into an altar, where first lay that Lamb of God which afterwards was sacrificed for the sins of all the world. And when Adrian the emperor, who intended a great despite to it, built a temple to Venus and Adonis in that place where the holy virgin mother and her more holy son were humbly laid; even so he could not prevent, but that even amongst the Gentile inhabitants of the neighbouring countries, it was held in an account far above scandal and contempt.* For God can ennoble even the meanest of creatures, especially if it be but a relative and instrumental to religion; higher than the injuries of scoffers and malicious persons. But it was then a temple full of religion, full of glory, when angels were the ministers, the holy virgin was the worshipper and Christ the deity.

* "Those who came to mock, remained to pray."

Considerations upon the Birth of our blessed Saviour Jesus.

1. Although the blessed Jesus desired with the ardency of an inflamed love to be born, and to finish the work of our redemption, yet he did not prevent the period of nature, nor antedate his own sanctions which he had established for ever. He staid nine months, and then brake forth as a giant joyful to run his course. For premature and hasty actions, and such counsels as know not how to expect the times appointed in God's decree, are like hasty fruit, or a young person snatched away in his florid age, sad and untimely. He that hastens to enjoy his wish before the time, raises his own expectation, and yet makes it unpleasant by impatience, and looseth the pleasure of the fruition when it comes, because he hath made his desires bigger than the thing can satisfy. He that must eat an hour before his time, gives probation of his intemperance or his weakness; and if we dare not trust God with the circumstance of the event, and stay his leisure, either we disrepute the infinity of his wisdom, or give clear demonstration of our own vanity.

2. When God descended to earth, he choose to be born in the suburbs and retirement of a small town; but he was pleased to die at Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea: which chides our shame and pride, who are willing to publish our gaieties in piazzas, and the corners of the streets of most populous places; but our defects and the instruments of our humiliation we carry into deserts, and cover with the night, and hide them under ground, thinking no secrecy dark enough to hide our shame, nor any theatre large enough to behold our pompous vanities; for so we make provisions for pride, and take great care to exclude humility.

3. When the holy virgin now perceived that the expectation of the nations was arrived at the very doors of revelation and entrance into

the world, she brought forth the holy Jesus, who, like light through transparent glass, past through; or as a ripe pomegranate from a fruitful tree, fell to the earth, without doing violence to its nurse and parent. She had no ministers to attend but angels, and neither her poverty nor her piety would permit her to provide other nurses; but herself did the offices of a tender and pious parent. She kissed him and worshipped him, and thanked him that he would be born of her, and she suckled him, and bound him in her arms and swaddling bands; and when she had represented to God her first scene of joy and eucharist, she softly laid him in the manger, till her desires and his own necessities call her to take him, and to rock him softly in her arms: and from this deportment she read a lecture of piety and maternal care, which mothers should perform toward their children when they are born, not to neglect any of that duty which nature and maternal piety requires.

4. Jesus was pleased to be born of a poor mother in a poor place, in a cold winter's night, far from home, amongst strangers, with all the circumstances of humility and poverty. And no man will have cause to complain of his course robe, if he remembers the swaddling clothes of this holy child; nor to be disquieted at his hard bed, when he considers Jesus laid in a manger: nor to be discontented at his thin table, when he calls to mind the king of heaven and earth was fed with a little breast-milk. But since the eternal wisdom of the Saviour who knew to choose the good and refuse the evil, did choose a life of poverty, it gives us demonstration, that riches and honours, those idols of the world's esteem, are so far from creating true felicities, that they are not of themselves eligible in the number of good things; however, no man is to be ashamed of innocent poverty, of which many wise men make vows, and of which the holy Jesus made election, and his apostles after him made public profession. And if any man will

choose and delight in the affluence of temporal good things, suffering himself to be transported with caitive affections in the pleasures of every day, he may well make a question whether he shall speed as well hereafter; since God's usual method is, that they only who follow Christ here shall be with him for ever. . . .

5. The condition of the person who was born, is here of greatest consideration. For he that cried in the manger, that sucked the breasts of a woman, that hath exposed himself to poverty and a world of inconveniences, is the Son of the living God, of the same substance with his Father, begotten before all ages, before the morning stars; he is God eternal. He is also, by reason of the personal union of the divinity with his human nature, the Son of God; not by adoption, as good men and beatified angels are, but by an extraordinary and miraculous generation. He is the heir of his Father's glories and possessions, not by succession, (for his Father cannot die,) but by an equality of communication. He is the express image of his Father's person according to both natures; the miracle and seal of his Godhead being, as upon wax, imprinted upon all the capacities of his humanity. And after all this, he is our Saviour; that, to our duties of wonder and adoration, we may add the affections of love and union; as himself, besides his being admirable in himself, is become profitable to us. *Vere verbum hoc est abbreviatum*, saith the prophet; the eternal word of the Father is shortened to the dimensions of an infant.

6. Here then are concentrated the prodigies of greatness and goodness, of wisdom and charity, of meekness and humility; and they march all the way in mystery and incomprehensible mixtures, if we consider him in the bosom of his father, where he is seated by the postures of love and essential felicity; and in the manger, where love also placed him, and an infinite desire to communicate his felicities to

us. As he is God, his throne is in the heaven, and he fills all things by his immensity: as he is man, he is circumscribed by an uneasy cradle, and cries in a stable. As he is God, he is seated upon a super-exalted throne; as man, exposed to the lowest estate of uneasiness and need. As God, clothed in a robe of glory, at the same instant when you may behold and wonder at his humanity wrapped in cheap and unworthy cradle-bands. As God, he is encircled with millions of angels; as man, in the company of beasts. As God, he is the eternal word of the Father, eternal, sustained by himself, all-sufficient, and without need: and yet he submitted himself to a condition imperfect, inglorious, indigent, and necessitous. And this consideration is so apt and natural to produce great affections of love, duty, and obedience, desires of union and conformity to his sacred person, life, actions, and laws, that we should resolve all our thoughts, and finally determine all our reason and our passions and capacities, by that saying of St. Paul, "He that loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed."

7. Upon the consideration of these glories, if a pious soul shall, by the supports of faith and love, enter into the stable where this great King was born, and with affections behold every member of the holy body, and thence pass into the soul of Jesus, we may see a scheme of holy meditations, enough to entertain all the degrees of our love and of our understanding, and make the mystery of the nativity as fruitful of holy thoughts as it was of blessings to us. And it may serve instead of a description of the person of Jesus conveyed to us in imperfect and apocryphal schemes. If we could behold his sacred feet with those affections which the holy virgin did, we have transmitted to us those mysteries in story which she had first in part by spiritual and divine infused light, and afterwards by observation. Those holy feet, tender and unable to support his sacred body, should bear him

over all the province of his cure with great zeal for the gaining of souls to the belief and obedience of his holy laws; those are the feet that should walk upon seas and hills of water as upon firm pavement; at which the lepers and diseased persons should stoop, and gather health up; which Mary Magdalene should wash with tears, and wipe with her hair, and anoint with costly nard, as expressions of love and adoration, and there find absolution and remedy for her sins; and which finally should be rent by the nails of the cross, and afterwards ascend above the heavens, making the earth to be his footstool. From hence, take patterns of imitation, that our piety be symbolical; that our affections be passionate and eucharistical, full of love, and wonder, and adoration; that our feet tread in the same steps, and that we transfer the symbol into mystery, and the mystery to devotion, praying the holy Jesus to actuate the same mercies in us which were finished at his holy feet, forgiving our sins, healing our sicknesses; and then place ourselves irremovably, becoming his disciples, and strictly observing the rules of his holy institution, sitting at the feet of this our greatest Master.

8. In the same manner a pious person may (with the blessed virgin) pass to the consideration of his holy hands, which were so often lifted up to God in prayer; whose touch was miraculous and medicinal, cleansing lepers, restoring perishing limbs, opening blind eyes, raising dead persons to life; those hands which fed many thousands by two miracles of multiplication; that purged the temple from profaneness; that in a sacramental manner bare his own body, and gave it to be the food and refreshment of elect souls; and after were cloven and rent upon the cross, till the wounds became (after the resurrection) so many transparencies and glorious instruments of solemn, spiritual, and efficacious benediction. Transmit this meditation into affections and practices, lifting up

pure hands in prayer, that our devotions be united to the merits of his glorious intercession; and putting ourselves into his hands and holy providence, let us beg those effects upon our souls and spiritual cures which his precious hands did operate upon their bodies, transferring those similitudes to our ghostly and personal advantages.

9. We may also behold His holy breast, and consider, that there lay that sacred heart, like the dove within the ark, speaking peace to us, being the region of love and sorrows, the fountain of both the sacraments, running out in the two holy streams of blood and water, when the rock was smitten, when his holy side was pierced: and there with St. John let us lay our head, and place our heart, and thence draw a treasure of holy revelations and affections, that we may rest on him only, and upon him lay our our burdens, filling every corner of our heart with thoughts of the most amiable and beloved Jesus.

10. In like manner, we may unite the day of his nativity with the day of his passion, and consider all the parts of his body as it was instrumental in all the work of our redemption; and so imitate, and in some proportion partake of, that great variety of sweetnesses and fond reflexes and gracious intercourses which passed between the blessed virgin and the holy child, according to his present capacities, and the clarity of that light which was communicated to her by divine infusion. And all the members of this blessed child, his eyes, his face, his head, all the organs of his senses, afford variety of entertainment and motion to our affections, according as they served in their several employments, and co-operations in the mysteries of our restitution.

11. But his body was but his soul's upper garment, and the considerations of this are as immaterial and spiritual as the soul itself, and more immediate to the mystery of the nativity.

This soul is of the same nature and substance with ours; in this inferior to the angels, that of itself it is incomplete, and discursive in a lower order of ratiocination; but in this superior: 1. That it is personally united to the Divinity, full of the Holy Ghost, overrunning with grace, which was dispensed to it without measure. And by the mediation of this union, as itself is exalted far above all orders of intelligences, so we also have contracted alliance with God, teaching us not to unravel our excellences by infamous deportments. 2. Here also we may meditate, that his memory is indeterminate and unalterable, ever remembering to do us good, and to present our needs to God by the means of his holy intercession. 3. That his understanding is without ignorance, knowing the secrets of our hearts, full of mysterious secrets of his Father's kingdom, in which all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God are hidden. 4. That his will is impeccable, entertained with an uninterrupted act of love to God, greater than all angels and beatified spirits present to God, in the midst of the transportations and ravishments of paradise: that this will is full of love to us, of humility in itself, of conformity to God, wholly resigned by acts of adoration and obedience. It was moved by "six wings;" zeal of the honour of God, and compunction for our sins, pity to our miseries, and hatred of our impieties, desires of satisfying the wrath of God, and great joy at the consideration of all the fruits of his nativity, the appeasing of his Father, the redemption of his brethren. And upon these wings he mounted up into the throne of glory, carrying our nature with him above the seats of angels. These second considerations present themselves to all that, with piety and devotion, behold the holy babe lying in the obscure and humble place of his nativity.

THE PRAYER.

1. Holy and immortal Jesus, I adore and worship thee with the lowest prostrations and humility of soul and body, and give thee all thanks for that great love to us whereof thy nativity hath made demonstration; for that humility of thine, expressed in the poor and ignoble circumstances which thou didst voluntarily choose in the manner of thy birth. And I present to thy holy humanity, enchased in the adorable divinity, my body and soul; humbly desiring, that as thou didst clothe thyself with a human body, thou mayest invest me with the robes of righteousness, covering my sins, enabling my weaknesses, and sustaining my mortality, till I shall finally, in conformity to thy beauties and perfections, be clothed with the stole of glory. Amen.

2. Vouchsafe to come to me by a more intimate and spiritual approximation, that so thou mayest lead me to thy Father; for of myself I cannot move one step towards thee. Take me by the hand, place me in thy heart, that there I may live, and there I may die; that, as thou hast united our nature to thy eternal being, thou mightest also unite my person to thine, by the interior adunations of love, and obedience, and conformity. Let thy ears be open to my prayers, thy merciful eyes look upon my miseries, thy holy hands be stretched out to my relief and succour: let some of those precious distilling tears, which nature, and thy compassion, and thy sufferings, did cause to distil and drop from those sacred fountains, water my stony heart, and make it soft, apt for the impressions of a melting, obedient, and corresponding love; and moisten mine eyes, that I may, upon thy stock of pity and weeping, mourn for my sins; that so my tears and sorrows, being drops of water coming from that holy rock, may indeed be united unto thine, and made precious by such holy mixtures. Amen.

3. Blessed Jesus, now that thou hast sanctified and exalted human nature, and made even my body precious by a personal uniting it to the divinity, teach me so reverently to account of it, that I may not dare to profane it with impure lusts or captive affections, nor unhallow that ground where thy holy feet have trodden. Give to me ardent desires, and efficacious prosecutions, of those holy effects which thou didst design for us in thy nativity, and other parts of our redemption: give me great confidence in thee, which thou hast encouraged by the exhibition of so glorious favours; great sorrow and confusion of face at the sight of mine own imperfections, and estrangements, and great distances from thee, and the perfections of thy soul; and bring me to thee by the strictnesses of a zealous and affectionate imitation of those sanctities which, next to the hypostatical union, added lustre and exaltency to thy humanity, that I may live here with thee in the expressions of a holy life, and die with thee by mortification and an unwearied patience, and reign with thee in immortal glories, world without end. Amen.

DISCOURSE I

Of Nursing Children in Imitation of the Blessed Virgin Mother.

1. THESE later ages of the world have declined into a softness above the effeminacy of Asian princes, and have contracted customs which those innocent and healthful days of our ancestors knew not, whose piety was natural, whose charity was operative, whose policy was just and valiant, and whose economy was sincere, and proportionable to the dispositions and requisites of nature. And in this particular, the good women of old gave one of their instances; the greatest personages nursed their own children,

and the work of mothers, and thought it was unlikely woman should become virtuous by ornaments, and super-additions of morality, who did decline the laws and prescriptions of nature, whose principles supply us with the first and most common rules of manners and more perfect actions. In imitation of whom, and especially of the virgin Mary, who was mother and nurse to the holy Jesus, I shall endeavour to correct those softnesses and unnatural rejections of children, which are popular, up to a custom and fashion, even where the necessities of nature or just reason can make excuse.

2. And I cannot think the question despicable, and the duty of meanest consideration; although it be specified in an office of small esteem, and suggested to us by the principles of reason, and not by express sanctions of divinity. For although other actions are more perfect and spiritual, yet this is more natural and humane, other things being superadded to a full duty rise higher, but this builds stronger, and is like a part of the foundation, having no lustre, but much strength; and however the others are full of ornament, yet this hath in it some degrees of necessity, and possibly is with more danger and irregularity omitted, than actions which spread their leaves fairer, and look more gloriously.

3. First, Mary I consider, that there are many customs of the body and the matter of chastity, which are highly criminal, and yet the laws of God expressed in Scripture name them not; but men are taught to distinguish them by that reason which is given us by nature, and is imprinted in our understanding, in order to the conservation of human kind. For since every creature hath something in it sufficient to propagate the kind, and to conserve the individuals from perishing in confusions and general disorders, which in beasts we call instinct, that is, an habitual or prime disposition to do certain things which are proportionable to the end whether it is designed: man also, if he



THE HOLY FAMILY.

be not more imperfect, must have the like : and because he knows and makes reflections upon his own acts, and understands the reason of it, that which in them is instinct, in him is natural reason, which is, a desire to preserve himself and his own kind, and differs from instinct, because he understands his instinct and the reasonableness of it, and they do not. But man being a higher thing even in the order of creation, and designed to a more noble end in his animal capacity, his argumentative instinct is larger than the natural instinct of beasts : for he hath instincts in him in order to the conservation of society, and therefore hath principles, that is, he hath natural desires to it for his own good, and because he understands them, they are called principles, and laws of nature ; but are no other than what I have now declared ; for beasts do the same things we do, and have many of the same inclinations, which in us are the laws of nature, even all which we have in order to our common end. But that which in beasts is nature and an impulsive force, in us must be duty and an inviting power : we must do the same things with an actual or habitual designation of that end to which God designs beasts, (supplying by his wisdom their want of understanding) and then what is mere nature in them, in us is natural reason. And therefore marriage in men is made sacred, whereas the unions of other creatures are so merely natural, that they are not capable of being virtuous, because men are bound to intend that end which God made. And this, with the superaddition of other ends, of which marriage is representative in part, and in part effective, does consecrate marriage, and makes it holy and mysterious. But then there are in marriage many duties which we are taught by instinct, that is, by that reason whereby we understand what are the best means to promote the end which we have assigned it. And by these laws, all unnatural mixtures are made unlawful,

and the decencies which are to be observed in marriage are prescribed us by this.

4. Secondly, Upon the supposition of this discourse I consider again, that although to observe this instinct or these laws of nature (in which I have now instanced) be no great virtue in any eminence of degree, (as no man is much commended for not killing himself, or for not degenerating into beastly lusts ;) yet to prevaricate some of these laws may become almost the greatest sin in the world. And therefore although to live according to nature be a testimony fit to be given to a sober and a temperate man, and rises no higher ; yet to do an action against nature is the greatest dishonour and impiety in the world, (I mean of actions whose scene lies in the body) and disentitles us to all relations to God, and vicinity to virtue.

5. Thirdly, Now amongst actions which we are taught by nature, some concern the being and the necessities of nature, some appertain to her convenience and advantage ; and the transgressions of these respectively have their heightnings or depressions ; and therefore to kill a man is worse than some preternatural pollutions, because more destructive of the end and designation of nature, and the purpose of instinct.

6. Fourthly, Every part of this instinct is then in some sense a law, when it is in a direct order to a necessary end, and by that is made reasonable. I say (in some sense) it is a law, that is, it is in a near disposition to become a law. It is a rule without obligation to a particular punishment, beyond the effect of the natural inordination and obliquity of the act : it is not the measure of a moral good or evil, but of the natural, that is, of comely and uncomely. For if in the individuals it should fail, or that there pass some greater obligation upon the person in order to a higher end, not consistent with those means designed in order to lesser the end, in that particular it is no fault, but some-

tion, that many tyrants have killed their mothers, but never any did violence to his nurse; as if they were desirous to suck the blood of their mother raw, which she refused to give to them digested into milk. And the bastard-brother of the Gracchi, returning from his victories in Asia to Rome, presented his mother with a jewel of silver, and his nurse with a girdle of gold, upon the same account. Sometimes children are exchanged, and artificial bastardies introduced into a family, and the right heir supplanted. It happened so to Artaabanus king of Epirus: his child was changed at nurse, and the son of a mean knight succeeded in the kingdom. The event of which was this: the nurse too late discovered the treason; a bloody war was commenced, both the pretenders slain in battle, and the kingdom itself was usurped by Alexander the brother to Olympias, the wife of Philip the Macedonian. At the best, though there happen no such extravagant and rare accidents, yet it is not likely a stranger should love the child better than the mother: and if the mother's care could suffer it to be exposed, a stranger's care may suffer it to be neglected. For how shall an hireling endure the inconveniences, the tediousnesses and unhandsomenesses of a nursery, when she whose natural affection might have made it pleasant, out of wantonness or softness hath declined the burthen? But the sad accidents, which, by too frequent observation, are daily seen happening to nurse-children, give great probation, that this intendment of nature designing mothers to be the nurses, that their affection might secure and increase their care, and the care best provide for their babes, is most reasonable, and proportionable to the dictates of humanity.

11. But as this instinct was made reasonable, so in this also the reason is in order to grace and spiritual effects; and, therefore, is among those things which God hath separated from the common instincts of nature, and made pro-

perly to be laws, by the mixtures of justice and charity. For it is part of that education which mothers as a duty owe to their children, that they do in all circumstances, and with all their powers which God to that purpose gave them, to promote their capacities and improve their faculties. Now in this also, as the temper of the body is considerable in order to the inclinations of the soul, so is the nurse in order to the temper of the body; and a lamb sucking a goat, or a kid sucking an ewe, change their fleece and hair respectively, say naturalists. For if the soul of man were put into the body of a mole, it could not see nor speak, because it is not fitted with an instrument apt and organical to the faculty: and when the soul hath its proper instruments, its music is pleasant or harsh, according to the sweetness or unevenness of the string it touches: for David himself could not have charmed Saul's melancholic spirit with the strings of his bow, or the wood of his spear. And just so are the actions or dispositions of the soul, angry or pleasant, lustful or cold, querulous or passionate, according as the body is disposed by the various intermixtures of natural qualities. And as the carelessness of nurses hath sometimes returned children to their parents crooked, consumptive, half-starved, and unclean from the impurities of nature: so their society and nourishment together have disposed them to peevishness, to lust, to drunkenness, to pride, to low and base demeanours, to stubbornness. And as a man would have been unwilling to have a child by Harpaste, Seneca's wife's fool; so he would in all reason be as unwilling to have had her to be the nurse: for very often mothers by the birth do not transmit their imperfections, yet it seldom happens but the nurse does; which is the more considerable, because nurses are commonly persons of no great rank, certainly lower than the mother, and by consequence liker to return their children with the lower and more

servile conditions ; and commonly, those vainer people teach them to be peevish and proud, to lie, or at least, seldom give them any first principles contrary to the nurse's vice. And therefore it concerns the parents' care, in order to a virtuous life of the child, to secure its first seasonings ; because, whatever it sucks in first, it swallows and believes infinitely, and practises easily, and continues longest. And this is more proper for a mother's care ; while the nurse thinks that giving the child suck, and keeping its body clean, is all her duty. But the mother cannot think herself so easily discharged. And this consideration is material in all cases, be the choice of the nurse ever so prudent and curious : and it is not easily apprehended to be the portion of her care to give it spiritual milk ; and, therefore, it intrenches very much upon impiety and positive relinquishing the education of their children, when mothers expose the spirit of the child either to its own weaker inclinations, or the wicked principles of an ungodly nurse, or the carelessness of any less obliged person.

12. And then let me add, that a child sucks the nurse's milk, and digests her conditions, if they be ever so bad, seldom gets any good. For virtue being superaddition to nature, and perfections not radical in the body, but contradictions to and ameliorations of natural indispositions, does not easily convey itself by ministrations of food, as vice does ; which, in most instances, is nothing but mere nature grown to custom, and not mended by grace : so that it is probable enough, such natural distemperatures may pass in the rivulets of milk, like evil spirits in a white garment, when virtues are of harder purchase, and dwell so low in the heart, that they but rarely pass through the fountains of nature. And therefore let no mother venture her child upon a stranger, whose heart she less knows than her own. And because few of those nicer women think better of others than themselves, it is but an act of the

providence to let my child derive imperfections, from one of whom I have not so good an opinion as of myself.

13. And if those many blessings and holy prayers which the child need, or his askings or sicknesses, or the mother's fears or joys respectively do occasion, should not be cast into this account ; yet those principles, which in all cases wherein the neglect is vicious, are the causes of the exposing the child, are extremely against the piety and charity of Christian religion, which preserves severity and austere deportment, and the labours of love, and exemplary tenderness of affections, and piety to children, which are the most natural and nearest relations the parents have. That religion which commands us to visit and to tend sick strangers, and wash the feet of the poor, and dress their ulcers, and sends us upon charitable embassies into unclean prisons, and bids us lay down our lives for one another, is not pleased with a niceness and sensual curiosity (that I may not name the wantonness of lusts) which denies suck to our own children. What is more humane and affectionate than Christianity ! and what is less natural and charitable than to deny the expressions of a mother's affection ? which certainly to good women is the greatest trouble in the world, and the greatest violence to their desires, if they should not express and minister.

14. And it should be considered, whether those mothers who have neglected their first duties of piety and charity, can expect so prompt and easy returns of duty and piety from their children, whose best foundation is love, and that love strongest which is most natural, and that most natural which is conveyed by the first ministeries and impresses of nourishment and education. And if love descends more strongly then it ascends, and commonly falls from the parents upon the children in cataracts, and returns back again up to the parents but in gentle dews ; if the child's affection keeps the

same proportions towards such unkind mothers, it will be as little as atoms in the sun, and never express itself but when the mother needs it not, that is in the sunshine of a clear fortune.

15. This then is amongst those instincts which are natural, heightened first by reason, and then exalted by grace, into the obligation of a law: and being amongst the sanctions of nature, its prevarication is a crime very near those sins which divines, in detestation of their malignity, call sins against nature, and is never to be excused but in cases of necessity or greater charity; as when the mother cannot be a nurse by reason of natural disability, or is afflicted with a disease which might be transmitted in the milk, or in case of the public necessities of a kingdom, for the securing of succession in the royal family. And yet concerning this last Lysurgus made a law, that the noblest amongst the Spartan women, though their king's wives, should at least nurse their eldest son, and the plebians should nurse all theirs: and Plutarch reports, that the second son of king Themistes inherited the kingdom in Sparta, only because he was nursed with his mother's milk, and the eldest was therefore rejected because a stranger was his nurse. And that queens have suckled and nursed their own children, is no very unusual kindness in the simplicity and hearty affections of elder ages, as is to be seen in Herodotus and other historians. I shall only remark one instance out of the Spanish chronicles, which Henry Stephens in his apology for Herodotus reports to have heard from thence related by a noble personage, Monsieur Marillac; that a Spanish lady married into France, nursed her child with so great a tenderness and jealousy, that having understood the little prince once to have suckled a stranger, she was unquiet till she had forced him to vomit it up again. In other cases the crime lies at their door who enforce neglect upon the

other, and is heightened in proportion to the motive of the omission; as if wantonness or pride be the parent of the crime, the issue, besides its natural deformity, hath the excrescences of pride or lust to make it more ugly.

16. To such mothers I propound the example of the holy virgin, who had the honour to be visited by an angel, yet, after the example of the saints in the Old Testament, she gave to the Holy Jesus drink from those bottles which himself had filled for his own drinking; and her paps were as surely blessed for giving him suck, as her womb for bearing him; and reads a lecture of piety and charity, which if we deny to our children, there is then in the world left no argument or relation great enough to kindle it from a cinder to a flame. God gives dry breasts, for a curse to some, for an affliction to others; but those that invite it to them by voluntary arts, love not blessing, therefore shall it be far from them. And I remember that it was said concerning Annus Minutius, the censor, that he thought it a prodigy and extremely ominous to Rome, that a Roman lady refused to nurse her child, and yet gave suck to a puppy, that her milk might with more safety be dried up with artificial applications. Let none therefore divide the interests of their own children: for she that appeared before Solomon, and would have the child divided, was not the true mother, and was the more culpable of the two.

THE PRAYER.

O holy and eternal God, Father of the creatures, and king of all the world, who hast imprinted in all the sons of thy creation, principles, and abilities to serve the end of their own preservation, and to men hast superadded reason, making those first propensities of nature

to be reasonable in order to society, and a conversation in communities and bodies politic, and hast by several laws and revelations directed our reasons to nearer applications to thee, and performance of thy great end, the glory of our Lord and Father ; teach me strictly to observe the order of creation, and the designs of the creatures, that in my order I may do that service which every creature does in its proper capacity. Lord, let me be as constant in the ways of religion as the sun in his course, as ready to follow the intimations of thy spirit as little birds are to obey the directions of thy providence and the conduct of thy hand ; and

let me never by evil customs, or vain company, or false persuasions, extinguish those principles of morality and right reason which thou hast imprinted in my understanding, in my creation and education, and which thou hast ennobled by the superadditions of Christian instruction : that I may live according to the rules of nature in such things which she teaches, modestly, temperately, and affectionately, in all the parts of my natural and political relations ; and that I, proceeding from nature to grace, may henceforth go on from grace to glory, the crown of all obedience, prudent and holy walking, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SECTION IV.

1. ALTHOUGH the birth of Christ was destitute of the usual excrescences and less necessary pomps which used to signify and illustrate the birth of princes; yet his first humility was made glorious with presages, miracles and significations from heaven, which did not only, like the furniture of a princely bed-chamber, speak the riches of the parent, or greatness of the Son, but did declare to all the world that their prince was born, publishing it with figures and representments almost as great as its empire.

2. For when all the world did expect that in Judea should be born their prince, and when the incredulous world had in their observation slipt by their true prince, because he came not in pompous and secular illustrations; upon that very stock, Vespasian was nursed up in hope of the Roman empire, and that hope made him great in designs, and they being prosperous made his fortunes correspond to his hopes, and he was endeared and engaged upon that fortune by the prophecy, which was never intended him by the prophet. But the fortune of the Roman monarchy was not great enough for this prince designed by the old prophets. And therefore it was not without the influence of a divinity, that his decessor Augustus, about the time of Christ's nativity, refused to be called LORD: possibly it was, to entertain the people with some hopes of restitution of their liberties, till he had griped the monarchy with a stricter and faster hold; but the Christians were apt to believe, that it was upon the pro-

phcey of a sibyll foretelling the birth of a greater prince, to whom all the world should pay adoration; and that the prince was about that time born in Judea, the oracle, which was dumb to Augustus's question, told him unasked, the devil having no tongue permitted him, but one to proclaim that an Hebrew child was his Lord and enemy.

3. At the birth of which child there was an universal peace through all the world.* For then it was that Augustus Cæsar, having composed all the wars of the world, did the third time cause the gates of Janus's temple to be shut; and this peace continued for twelve years, even till the extreme old age of the prince, until rust had sealed the temple doors, which opened not till the sedition of the Athenians and the rebellion of the Dacians caused Augustus to arm. For he that was born was the Prince of Peace, and came to reconcile God with man, and man with his brother; and to make, by the sweetness of his example, and the influence of a holy doctrine, such happy atonements between disagreeing natures, such confederations and societies between enemies, that "the wolf and the lamb should lie down together," and a little child boldly and without danger put his

* "Although we cannot subscribe to the opinion of those writers who, being led into a mistake by Orosius, have asserted, 'that at the time of our Saviour's birth the temple of Janus was shut, and every part of the Roman world in profound peace, it must be admitted, that if the period be compared with antecedent times, it may justly be called the age of peace and tranquillity.'—*Musæus's Com.*

finger in the nest and cavern of an asp:" and it could be no less than miraculous, that so great a body as the Roman empire, consisting of so many parts, whose constitutions were different, their humours contrary, their interests contradicting each others greatness, and all these violently oppressed by an usurping power, should have no limbs out of joint, not so much as an aching tooth or a rebelling humour in that huge collection of parts: but so it seemed good in the eye of heaven, by so great and good a symbol, to declare not only the greatness, but the goodness of the prince that was then born in Judea, the Lord of all the world.

4. But because the heavens, as well as the earth, are his creatures, and do serve him, at his birth he received a sign in heaven above, as well as in the earth beneath, as an homage paid to their common Lord. For as certain "shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks by night," near that part where Jacob did use to feed his cattle when he was in the land of Canaan, "the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them." Needs must the shepherds be afraid, when an angel came arrayed in glory, and clothed their persons in a robe of light, great enough to confound their senses and scatter their understandings. But the angel said unto them, "Fear not, for I bring unto you tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The shepherds needed not be invited to go to see this glorious sight; but, lest their fancy should rise up to an expectation of a prince as externally glorious as might be hoped for upon the consequence of so glorious an apparition, the angel, to prevent the mistake, told them of a sign, which indeed was no other than the thing signified; but yet was therefore a sign, because it was so remote from the com-

mon probability and expectation of such a birth, that by being a miracle, so great a prince should be born so poorly, it became an instrument to signify itself and all the other parts of mysterious consequence. For the angel said, "This shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapt in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

5. But as light, when it first begins to gild the east, scatters indeed the darknesses from the earth, but ceases not to increase its flame till it hath made perfect day: so it happened now in this apparition of the angel of light, he appeared and told his message, and did shine, but the light arose higher and higher, till midnight was as bright as mid-day; "for suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host:" and after the angel had told his message in plain song, the whole chorus joined in descant, and sang an hymn to the tune and sense of heaven, where glory is paid to God in eternal and never-ceasing offices, and whence good will descends upon men in perpetual and never stopping torrents. Their song was, "Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good will towards men:" by this song not only referring to the strange peace which at that time put all the world in ease, but to the great peace which this new-born prince should make between his Father and all mankind.

6. As soon as the blessed choristers had sung their Christmas carol, and taught the church a hymn to put into her offices for ever in the anniversary of this festivity, "the angels returned into heaven, and the shepherds went to Bethlehem, to see this thing which the Lord had made known unto them. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." Just as the angel had prepared their expectation, they found the narrative verified, and saw the glory and the mystery of it, by that representation which was made by the heavenly ministers; seeing GOD through the veil of a child's flesh.

the heir of heaven wrapped in swaddling clothes, and a person to whom the angels did minister laid in a manger; and they beheld, and wondered, and worshipped.

7. But as precious liquor warmed and heightened by a flame first crowns the vessel, and then dances over its brim into the fire, increasing the cause of its own motion and extravagancy: so it happened to the shepherds, whose hearts being filled with the oil of gladness up unto the brim, the joy ran over, as being too big to be confined in their own breasts, and did communicate itself, growing greater by such dissemination: for "when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child." "And" (as well they might) "all that heard it wondered." But Mary, having first changed her joy into wonder, turned her wonder into entertainments of the mystery, and the mystery into a fruition and cohabitation with it: For "Mary kept all these sayings, and pondered them in her heart." And the shepherds having seen what the angels did upon the publication of the news, which less concerned them than us, had learnt their duty, to sing in honour to God for the nativity of Christ: For "the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

8. But the angels had told the shepherds that the nativity was "glad tidings of great joy unto all people:" and, that "the heavens might declare the glory of God; and the firmament shew his handy-work," this also was told abroad even to the Gentiles by a sign from heaven, by the message of a star. For there was a prophecy of Balaam, famous in all the eastern country, and recorded by Moses, "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel: out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion."

Which although in its first sense it signified David, who was the conqueror of the Moabites; yet, in its more mysterious and chiefly-intended sense, it related to the son of David. And in expectation of the event of this prophecy, the Arabians, the sons of Abraham by Keturah, whose portion, given by their patriarch, was gold, frankincense, and myrrh; who were great lovers of astronomy; did with diligence expect the revelation of a mighty prince in Judea, at such time when a miraculous and extraordinary star should appear: and therefore "when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, there came wise men," inspired by God, taught by art, and persuaded by prophecy, "from the East to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." The Greeks suppose this, which was called a star, to have been indeed an angel in a pillar of fire, and the semblance of a star; and it is made the more likely, by coming and standing directly over the humble roof of his nativity; which is not discernable in the station of a star, though it be supposed to be lower than the orb of the moon. To which if we add, that they only saw it, (so far as we know,) and that it appeared, as it were, by voluntary periods, it will not be very improbable but that it might be like the angel that went before the sons of Israel in a pillar of fire by night, or rather like the little shining stars sitting upon the bodies of Probus, Tharacus, and Andronicus, the martyrs, when their bodies were searched for, in the days of Diocletian, and pointed out by those bright angels.

9. This star did not trouble Herod, till the Levantine princes expounded the mysteriousness of it, and said it declared a "king to be born in Jewry," and that the star was his; not applicable to any signification, but of a king's birth. And therefore although it was no prodigy nor comet, foretelling diseases, plagues,

war, and death, but only the happy birth of a most excellent prince; yet it brought affrightment to Herod and all Jerusalem: For "when Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." And thinking that the question of the kingdom was now in dispute, and an heir sent from heaven to lay challenge to it, (who brought a star and the learning of the East with him for evidence and probation of his title,) Herod thought there was no security to his usurped possession, unless he could rescind the decrees of heaven, and reverse the results and eternal counsels of predestination. And he was resolved to venture it, first by craft, and then by violence.

10. And first, "he calls the chief priests and scribes of the people together, and demanded of them, where CHRIST should be born;" and found, by their joint determination, that Bethlehem of Judea was the place designed by ancient prophecy and God's decree. Next he inquired of the wise men concerning the star; but privily what time it appeared. For the star had not a motion certain and regular by the laws of nature; but it so guided the wise men in their journey, that it stood when they stood, moved not when they rested, and went forward when they were able; making no more haste than they did, who carried much of the business and employment of the star along with them. But when Herod was satisfied in his questions, he sent them to Bethlehem, with instructions to search diligently for the young child, and to bring him word; pretending that he would come and worship him also.

11. The wise men prosecuted the business of their journey, and having heard the king, they departed, and the star (which, as it seems, attended their motion) went before them, until it came and stood over where the young child was; where, when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Such a joy

as is usual to wearied travellers when they are entering into their inn; such a joy as when our hopes and greatest longings are laying hold upon the proper objects of their desires; a joy of certainty immediately before the possession: for that is the greatest joy, which possesses before it is satisfied, and rejoices with a joy not abated by the surfeits of possession, but heightened with all the apprehensions and fancies of hope, and the neighbourhood of fruition; a joy of nature, of wonder, and of religion. And now their hearts laboured with a throng of spirits and passions, and ran into the house to welcome Jesus, even before their feet: but when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother. And possibly their expectation was something lessened and their wonder heightened, when they saw their hope empty of pomp and gaiety; the great king's throne, to be a manger; a stable to be his chamber of presence; a thin court, and no ministers; and the king himself a lovely babe, and, but that he had a star over his head, nothing to distinguish him from the common condition of children, or to exempt him from the miseries of a poor and empty fortune.

12 This did not scandalize those wise persons; but, being convinced by that testimony from heaven, and the union of all circumstances, they fell down and worshipped him, after the manner of the Orientalists, when they do veneration to their kings; not with an empty *are* and gay blessing of fine words, but they bring presents, and come into his courts; for "when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh." And if these gifts were mysterious, beyond the acknowledgment of him to be the king of the Jews, and Christ, that should come into the world; frankincense might signify him to be acknowledged a God, myrrh to be a man, and gold to be a king. Unless we choose by gold to signify the act of mercy, by myrrh the chastity of minds and purity of our bodies, to

the incorruption of which, myrrh is especially instrumental; and by incense we intend our prayers, as the most apt presents and oblations to the honour and service of this young king. But however the fancies of religion may represent variety of ideas, the act of adoration was direct and religious, and the myrrh was medicinal to his tender body: the incense was possibly no more than was necessary in a stable, the first throne of his humility; and the gold was a good antidote against the present indigences of his poverty. Presents such as these were used in all the Levant (especially in Arabia and Saba, to which the growth of myrrh and frankincense were proper) in their addresses to their God and to their king; and were instruments with which, under the veil of flesh, they worshipped the eternal Word; the wisdom of God under infant innocency; the almighty power in so great weakness; and under the lowliness of human nature, the altitude of majesty and the infinity of divine glory. And so was verified the prediction of the prophet Isaiah, under the type of the son of the prophetess, "Before a child shall have knowledge to cry my father and my mother, he shall take the spoil of Damascus and Samaria from before the king of Assyria."

13. When they had paid the tribute of their offerings and adoration, being warned in their sleep by an angel not to return to Herod, they returned into their own country another way, where, having been satisfied with the pleasures of religion, and taught by that rare demonstration, which was made by Christ, how man's happiness did nothing at all consist in the affluence of worldly possessions, or the tumours of honour; having seen the eternal Son of God poor and weak, and unclothed of all exterior ornaments; they renounced the world, and retired empty into the recesses of religion, and the delights of philosophy.

Reflections upon the Vision of the Angels to the Shepherds.

1. WHEN the angels saw that come to pass which Gabriel the great ambassador of God had declared; that which had been prayed for and expected four thousand years; and that by the merits of this new born prince, their younger brethren and inferiors in the order of intelligent creatures, were now to be redeemed; that men should partake the glories of their secret habitations, and should fill up those void places which the fall of Lucifer and the third part of the stars had made, their joy was great as their understanding, and these mountains did leap with joy, because the valleys were filled with benediction and a fruitful shower from heaven. And, if at the conversion of one sinner there is jubilation and a festival kept among the angels, how great shall we imagine this rejoicing to be, when salvation and redemption were sent to all the world? But we also, to whom the joy did more personally relate, (for they rejoiced for our sakes) should learn to estimate the grace done us, and believe there is something very extraordinary in the piety and salvation of a man, when the angels, who in respect of us are unconcerned in the communications, rejoice with the joy of conquerors, or persons suddenly ransomed from tortures and death.

2. But the angels also had other emotions: for, besides the pleasures of that joy which they had in beholding human nature so highly exalted, and that God was man, and man was God, they were transported with admiration at the ineffable counsel of God's predestination, prostrating themselves with adoration and modesty, on seeing God so humbled, and man so changed, and so full of charity, that God stooped to the condition of man, and man was inflamed beyond the love of seraphims, and was made more knowing than cherubims, more established than thrones, more happy than all

the orders of angels. The issue of this consideration teaches us to learn their charity, and to exterminate all the intimations and beginnings of envy, that we may as much rejoice at the good of others as of ourselves ; for then we love good for God's sake, when we love good wherever God hath placed it ; and that joy is charitable which overflows our neighbour's fields, when ourselves are unconcerned in the personal advantages ; for so we are made partakers of all that fear God, when charity unites their joy to ours, as it makes us partakers of their common sufferings.

3. And now the angels who had adored the holy Jesus in heaven, come also to pay their homage to him upon earth ; and laying aside their flaming swords, they take into their hands instruments of music, and sing, *Glory be to God on high*. First signifying to us, that the incarnation of the holy Jesus was a very great instrument of the glorification of God ; and that those divine perfections, in which he is chiefly pleased to communicate himself to us, were in nothing manifested so much as in the mysteriousness of this work. Secondly, that in vain doth man satisfy himself with complacencies and ambitious designs upon earth, when he sees before him God, in the form of a servant, humble, and poor, and crying, and an infant full of need and weakness.

4. But God hath pleased to reconcile his glory with our eternal benefit ; and that also, was part of the angels' song, "*In earth peace to men of good will.*" For now we need not with Adam to fly from the presence of the Lord, saying, "*I heard thy voice, and I was afraid, and hid myself ;*" for he from whom our sins made us once to flee, now weeps, and is an infant in his mother's arms, (seeking strange means to be reconciled to us) hath forgotten all his anger, and is swallowed up with love, and encircled with irradiations of fond affections and good will : and the effects of this good will are

not referred only to persons of heroical and eminent graces and operations ; of vast and extensive charities ; of prodigious abstinences of eremitical retirements, of ascetical diet ; of perfect religion, and canonized persons ; but to all men of good will, whose souls are hallowed with holy purposes and pious desires ; though the beauties of the religion and holy thoughts were not spent in exterior acts, nor called out by the opportunities of a rich and expressive fortune.

5. But here we know where the seat and regiment of peace is placed ; and all of it must pass by us and descend upon us as a duty and reward. It proceeds from the Word incarnate, from the Son of God undertaking to reconcile us to his Father ; and it is ministered and consigned unto us by every event and act of providence, whether it be decyphered in characters of paternal indulgence, or of correction, or pardon. For that is not peace from above, to have all things according to our human and natural wishes ; but to be in favour with God, that is peace ; always remembering, that to be chastised by him is not a certain testimony of his mere wrath, but to all his servants a character of love and of paternal provision, since he chastises every son whom he receives. Whosoever seeks to avoid all this world's adversity, can never find peace ; but he only who hath resolved all his affections and placed them in the heart of God, he who denies his own will, and hath killed self love, and all those enemies within that make afflictions to become miseries indeed and full of bitterness, he only enjoys this peace ; and in proportion to every man's mortification and self denial, so are the degrees of his peace ; and this is the peace which the angel proclaimed at the enunciation of that birth which taught humility and contempt of things below, and all their vainer glories, by the greatest argument in the world, even the poverty of God incarnate. And if God sent his own, natural, only-begotten

and beloved Son, in all the dresses of poverty and contempt ; that person is vain, who thinks God will love him better than he loved his own Son, or that he will express his love any other or gentler way than to make him partaker of the fortune of his eldest Son. There is one other postern to the dwellings of peace, and that is, good will to men ; for so much charity as we have to others, such a measure of peace also we may enjoy at home. For peace was only proclaimed to men of good will, to them that are at peace with God and all the world.

6. But the angel brought the message to shepherds, to persons simple, and mean, and humble, persons likely to be more apprehensive of the mystery, and less of the scandal, of the poverty of the Messiah ; for they whose custom or affections dwell in secular pomps, who are not used by charity or humility to stoop to an evenness and consideration of their brethren of equal natures, though of unequal fortunes, are persons, of all the world, most indisposed and removed from the understanding of spiritual excellences, especially when they do not come clothed with advantages of the world, and of such beauties which they admire. God himself, in poverty, becomes a prejudice to them that love riches, and simplicity is folly to crafty persons, a mean birth is an ignoble stain, beggary is a scandal, and the cross an unanswerable objection. But the angel's moral in the circumstance of his address, and inviting the poor shepherds to Bethlehem, is, that none are fit to come to Christ but those who are poor in spirit, despisers of the world, simple in their hearts, without craft and secular designs ; and, therefore, neither did the angel tell the story to Herod, nor to the Scribes and Pharisees, whose ambition had ends contradictory to the simplicity and poverty of the birth of Jesus.

7. These shepherds when they conversed with angels were " watching over their flocks by night ;" no revellers, but in a painful and

dangerous employment, the work of an honest calling, securing their folds against incursions of wild beasts, which in those countries are not few or infrequent. And Christ being the great shepherd, (and possibly for the analogy's sake the sooner manifested to shepherds,) hath made his ministers overseers of their flocks, distinguished in their particular folds, and conveys the mysteries of his kingdom first to the pastors, and by their ministry to the flocks : but although all of them be admitted to the ministry, yet those only to the interior recesses and nearer imitations of Jesus who are watchful over their flocks, assiduous in their labours, painful in their sufferings, present in the dangers of the sheep, ready to interpose their persons and sacrifice their lives ;--these are shepherds who first converse with angels, and finally shall enter into the presence of the Lord. But besides this symbol, we are taught in the significations of the letter, that he that is diligent in the business of an honest calling, is then doing service to God, and a work so pleasing to him who hath appointed the sons of men to labour, that to these shepherds he made a return and recompense by the conversation of an angel ; and hath thus advanced the reputation of an honest and a mean employment, to such a testimony of acceptance, that no honest person, though busied in meaner offices, may ever hereafter, in the estimation of Christ's disciples, become contemptible.

8. The signs which the angel gave to discover the babe were no mark of lustre and vanity ; but they should find, first, a babe ; second, swaddled ; third, lying in a manger : the first, a testimony of his humility, the second, of his poverty, the third, of his inconveniences and uneasiness ; for Christ came to combat the whole body of sin, and to destroy every province of Satan's kingdom ; for these are direct antagonists to " the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Against the first, Christ

opposed his hard and uneasy lodging; against the second, the pooriness of his swaddling bands and mantle; and the third is combatted by the great dignation and descent of Christ from a throne of majesty to the state of an infant. And these are the first lessons he hath taught us for our imitation; which that we may the better do, as we must take him for our pattern, so also for our helper, and pray to the holy child, and he will not only teach us, but also give us power and ability.

THE PRAYER.

1. O blessed and eternal Jesus, at whose birth the choirs of angels sang praises to God, and proclaimed peace to men, sanctify my will and inferior affections; make me to be within the conditions of peace, that I be holy and mortified, a despiser of the world and exterior vanities, humble and charitable; that by the eminent example I may be so fixed in the designs and prosecution of the ends of God and a blissful eternity, that I be unmoved with the terrors of the world, unaltered with its allurements and seductions, not ambitious of its honour, not desirous of its fulness and plenty; but make me diligent in the employment thou gavest me, faithful in discharge of my trust, modest in my desires, content in the issues of thy providence: that in such dispositions I may receive and entertain visitations from heaven, and revelations of the mysteries and blisses evangelical; that by such directions I may be brought into thy presence, there to see thy beauties and admire thy graces, and imitate all thy imitable excellences, and rest in thee for ever; in this world, by the perseverance of a holy and comfortable life; and in the world to come, in the participation of thy

essential glories and felicities, O blessed and eternal Jesus

Considerations of the Epiphany.

1. GOD, who is the universal Father of all men, at the nativity of the Messiah, gave notice of it to all the world, as they were represented by the grand division of Jews and Gentiles; to the Jewish shepherds by an angel; to the eastern magi by a star. For the gospel is of universal dissemination, not confined within the limits of national prerogative, but catholic and diffused. As God's love was, so was the dispensation of it; "without respect of persons:" for all being included under the curse of sin, were to him equal and undistinguishable objects of mercy. And Jesus, descended of the Jews, was also "the expectation of the Gentiles," and therefore communicated to all: "the grace of God" being like the air we breathe, and "it hath appeared to all men," saith St. Paul; but the conveyances and communications of it were different in the degrees of clarity and illustration. The angel told the shepherds the story of the nativity plainly and literally: the star invited the wise men by its rareness and preternatural apparition; to which also, as by a foot path, they had been led by the prophecy of Balaam.

2. But here, first, the grace of God prevents us; without him we can do nothing; he lays the first stone in every spiritual building, and then expects, by that strength he first gave us, that we make the superstructures. But as a stone thrown into a river first moves the water, and disturbs its surface into a circle, and then its own force wafts the neighbouring drops into a larger figure, by its proper weight; so is the grace of God the first principle of our spiritual motion, and when it moves

us into its own figure, and hath actuated and ennobled our natural powers by the influence of that first incentive, we continue the motion, and enlarge the progress. But as the circle on the face of the waters grows weaker, till it hath smoothed itself into a natural and even current, unless the force be renewed or continued; so does all our natural endeavour, when first set a work by God's preventing grace, decline to the imperfection of its own kind, unless the same force be made energetical and operative, by the continuation and renewing of the same supernatural influence.

3. And therefore the eastern magi, being first raised up into wonder and curiosity by the apparition of the star, were very far from finding Jesus by such general and indefinite significations; but then the goodness of God's grace increased its own influence: for an inspiration from the spirit of God admonished them to observe the star; shewed the star that they might find it, taught them to acknowledge it, instructed them to understand its purpose, and invited them to follow it, and never left them till they had found the holy Jesus. Thus also God deals with us. He gives us the first grace, and adds the second; he enlightens our understandings, and actuates our faculties, and sweetly allures us by the proposition of rewards, and wounds us with the arrows of his love, and inflames us with fire from heaven; ever giving us new assistances or increasing the old; refreshing us with the comforts or arming us with patience; sometimes stirring our affections by the lights held out to our understanding; sometimes bringing confirmation to our understanding by the motion of our affections, till, by variety of means, we at last arrive at Bethlehem, in the service and entertainments of the holy Jesus. Which we shall certainly do, if we follow the invitations of grace and exterior assistances; which are given us to instruct us, to help us, and to invite us, but

not to *force* our endeavours and co-operations.

4. As it was an unsearchable wisdom, so it was an unmeasurable grace, of providence, which God did exhibit to the wise men; to them, as to all men; disposing the ministeries of his grace sweetly, and by proportion to the capacities of the person suscipient. For God called the Gentiles by such means, their customs and learning had made prompt and easy. For these magis were great philosophers and astronomers, and therefore God sent a miraculous star to invite and lead them to a new and more glorious light, the lights of grace and glory. And God so blessed them in following the star, to which their innocent curiosity and national customs were apt to lead them, that their custom was changed to grace, and their learning heightened with inspiration, and God crowned all with a spiritual and glorious event. It was not much unlike, that which God did to the princes and diviners among the Philistines, who sent the ark back with five golden emrods and five golden mice; an act proportionable to the custom and sense of their nation and religion: yet God accepted their opinion and divination to the utmost end they designed it, and took the plagues of emrods and mice from them. For oftentimes the custom, or the philosophy, or the opinions of a nation are made instrumental, through God's providence, to ends higher than they can produce by their own energy and intendment. And thus the astrological divinations of the magi, were turned into the order of a greater design than the whole art could promise, their employment being altered into grace, and nature into a miracle. But when the wise men were brought by this means, and had seen Jesus, then God takes ways more immediate and proportionable to the kingdom of grace: the next time God speaks to them by an angel. For so is God's usual manner to bring us to him; first, by

ways agreeable to us, and then, by ways agreeable to himself. And when he hath furnished us with new capacities, he gives new lights in order to more perfect employments: and "to him that hath shall be given full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over;" the eternal kindness of God being like the sea, which delights to run in its old channel, and to fill the hollowness of the earth, which itself hath made, and hath once watered.

5. This star, which conducted the wise men to Bethlehem, (if at least it was properly a star, and not an angel,) was set in its place to be seen by all; but was not observed, or not understood, nor its message obeyed, by any but the three wise men. And indeed no man hath cause to complain of God, as if ever he would be deficient in assistances necessary to his service; but first, the grace of God separates us from the common condition of incapacity and indisposition, and then we separate ourselves one from another by the use or neglect of this grace: and God doing his part to us, hath cause to complain of us, who neglect that which is our portion of the work. And however even the issues and the kindnesses of God's predestination and antecedent mercy do very much, toward the making the grace to be affective of its purpose, yet the manner of all those influences and operations being moral, persuasive, reasonable, and divisible, by concurrence of various circumstances, the cause and the effect are brought nearer and nearer in various susceptibles; but not brought so close together, but that God expects us to do something towards it; so that we may say with St. Paul, "It is not I, but the grace of God that is with me:" and at the same time, when by reason of our co-operation we actuate and improve God's grace, and become distinguished from other persons more negligent under the same opportunities, God is he who also does

distinguish us by the proportions and circumsstantiate applications of his grace to every singular capacity; that we may be careful not to neglect the grace, and yet to return the entire glory to God.

6. Although God, to second the generous design of the wise personages in their inquiry of the new Prince, made the star to guide them through the difficulties of their journey, yet, when they came to Jerusalem, the star disappeared; God so resolving to try their faith, and the activity of their desires; to demonstrate to them that God is the Lord of all his creatures, and a voluntary dispenser of his own favours, and can as well take them away as indulge them; and to engage them upon the use of ordinary means and ministeries when they are to be had: for now the extraordinary and miraculous guide for a time did cease, that they being at Jerusalem might inquire of them whose office and profession of sacred mysteries did oblige them to publish the MESSIAH. For God is so great a lover of order, so regular and certain an exactor of us to use those ordinary ministeries of his own appointing, that he having used the extraordinary but as architects do frames of wood, to support the arches till they be built, takes them away when the work is ready, and leaves us to those other of his designation; and hath given such efficacy to these, that they are as persuasive and operative as a miracle; and St. Paul's sermon would convert as many, as if Moses should rise from the grave. And now the doctrines of christianity have not only the same truth, but the same evidence and virtue, also, they had in the midst of those prime demonstrations extraordinary, by miracle and prophecy, if men were equally disposed as the magi.

7. When they were come to the doctors of the Jews, they asked confidently, and with great openness, under the ear and eye of a tyrant prince, bloody and timorous, jealous and

ambitious, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" and so gave evidence of their faith, of their magnanimity, and fearless confidence and profession of it, and of their love of the mystery and object, in pursuance of which they had taken so troublesome and vexatious journeys: and besides that they upbraided the tepidity and infidel baseness of the Jewish nation, who stood unmoved and unconcerned by all the circumstances of wonder, and stirred not one step to make inquiry after, or to visit the new-born king; they also teach us to be open and confident in our religion and faith, and not to consider our temporal, when they once come to contest against our religious interests.

8. The doctors of the Jews told the wise men where Christ was to be born; the magi address themselves with haste to see him and to worship; and the doctors themselves stir not; God not only serving himself with truth out of the mouths of impious persons, but magnifying the recesses of his counsel and wisdom and predestination, by using the same doctrine to glorify himself and to confound his enemies, to save the scholars and to condemn the tutors, to instruct one and upbraid the other; making it an instrument of faith and a conviction of infidelity: the sermons of the doctors, in such cases, being like the spoils of beavers, sheep, and silk worms, designed to clothe others, and are made the occasions of their own nakedness, and the causes of their death. But as it is a demonstration of the divine wisdom, so it is of human folly; there being no greater imprudence in the world, than to do others advantage, and to neglect our own. If thou doest well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee: but if thou beest like a channel in a garden, through which the water runs to cool and moisten the herbs, but nothing for its own use; thou buildest a fortune to them upon the ruins of thine own house, while after thy

preaching to others, thou thyself dost become a cast-away

9. When the wise men departed from Jerusalem, the star again appeared, and they rejoiced with exceeding great joy: and indeed to new converts and persons in their first addresses to the worship of God, such spiritual and exterior comforts are often indulged, because then God judges them to be most necessary, as being invitations to duty by the entertainments of our affections with such sweetnesss, which represent the glory of reward by the antepasts and refreshments dispensed even in the ruggedness of the way, and inconveniences of the journey. All other delights are the pleasures of beasts, or the sports of children; these are the antepasts and preventions of the full feasts and overflowings of eternity.

10. When they came to Bethlehem, and the star pointed them to a stable, they entered in, and being enlightened with a divine ray, proceeding from the face of the holy child, and seeing through the cloud, and passing through the scandal of his mean lodging and poor condition, they bowed themselves to the earth; first giving *themselves* an oblation to this great king, then making offering of their gifts; for a man's person is first accepted, then his gift: God first regarded Abel, and then accepted his offering: which we are best taught to understand by the present instance; for it means, that all outward services and oblations are made acceptable by the prior presentation of an inward sacrifice. If we have first presented ourselves, then our gift is pleasant, as coming but to express the truth of the first sacrifice; but if our persons be not first made a holocaust to God, the lesser oblations of outward presents are like sacrifices without salt and fire, nothing to make them pleasant or religious. For all other senses of this proposition charge upon God the distinguishing

and acceptance of persons, against which he solemnly protests: God regards no man's person, but according to the doing of his duty; but then God is said first to accept the person, and then the gift, when the person is first sanctified and given to God by the vows and habits of a holy life, and then all the actions of his religion are homogeneal to their principle, and accepted by acceptance of the man.

11. These magi presented to the holy babe gold, frankincense, and myrrh, protesting their faith of three articles by the symbolical oblation: by gold, that he was a king; by incense, that he was a God; by myrrh, that he was a man. And the presents also were representative of interior virtues: the myrrh signifying faith, mortification, chastity, compunction, and all the actions of the *purgative* way of spiritual life; the incense signifying hope, prayer, obedience, good intention, and all the actions and devotions of the *illuminative*; the gold representing love to God and our neighbours, the contempt of riches, poverty of spirit, and all the eminences of spiritual riches of the *unitive* life. And these oblations if we present to the holy Jesus, both our persons and our gifts shall be accepted, our sins shall be purged, our understandings enlightened, and our wills, united to this holy child, and entitled to a communion of all his glories.

12. And thus, in one view and two instances, God hath drawn all the world to himself by his Son Jesus, in the instance of the shepherds and the Arabian magi, Jews and Gentiles, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, noble and ignoble; that in him all nations, and all conditions, and all families, and all persons might be blessed; having called all by one star or other, by natural reason or by the secrets of philosophy, by the revelations of the gospel or by the ministry of angels, by the illuminations of the spirit or by the sermons and dictates of spiritual

fathers; and hath consigned this lesson to us, that we must never "appear before the Lord empty," but offering gifts to him by the expenses or by the affections of charity, either the worshipping or the oblations of religion, either the riches of the world or the love of the soul: for if we cannot bring gold with the rich Arabians, we may with the poor shepherds come and "kiss the Son, lest he be angry;" and in all cases come and "serve him with fear and reverence," and spiritual rejoicings.

THE PRAYER.

Most holy Jesus, thou art the glory of thy people Israel, and a light to the Gentiles, and wert pleased to call the Gentiles to the adoration and knowledge of thy sacred person and laws, communicating the inestimable riches of thy holy discipline to all, with a universal undistinguishing love: give unto us spirits docile, pious, prudent, and ductile, that no motion or invitation of grace be ineffectual, but may produce excellent effects upon us, and the secret whispers of thy Spirit may prevail upon our affections in order to piety and obedience, as certainly as the loudest and most clamorous sermons of the gospel. Create in us such excellences as are fit to be presented to thy glorious majesty; accept of the oblation of myself, and my entire services: but be thou pleased to verify my offering, and secure the possession to thyself, that the enemy may not pollute the sacrifice, or divide the gift, or question the title; but, that I may be wholly thine, and for ever, clarify my understanding, sanctify my will, replenish my memory with arguments of piety: then shall I present to thee an oblation rich and precious as the treble gift of

the Levantine princes. Lord, I am thine, reject me not from thy favour, exclude me not from thy presence; then shall I serve thee all the days of my life, and partake of the glories of thy kingdom, in which thou reignest gloriously and eternally. Amen.

HINTS ON THE DESIGN

OF THE

VISIT OF THE EASTERN MAGI.

By the Editor.

It is impossible not to admire the sacred narrative of the journey and worship of the eastern magi,—it is so natural in its beauty, and so simple in its sublimity. It has the very air of truth in its aspect, and all the force of truth in its spirit.

What, however, is the real and chief lesson taught by it? What did God intend to prove or promote, by giving to this event such prominence in the history of the incarnation?

Whatever it was, the lesson terminates with the visit of the magi: for, like the star of Bethlehem, they disappear for ever, when they leave the manger. We just know, that, “they departed to their own country:” but, what was their report or their reception there; or, what was their future history, we are not informed. Tradition is, indeed, both voluble and voluminous on the subject; but it is not to be depended on.

I mention this at once and distinctly, that no one may look beyond the Scriptures for the sacred design of the event. That design must be found from the Bible, or not at all:—for whatever purpose was answered by the visit in their own case or in that of their country,

we are utterly ignorant of it. It is not, therefore, an event to be accounted for or explained by its remote consequences in the east; but one which, if justified or explained at all, must be so by its immediate object and effects at Jerusalem.

Now the visit of the magi to Jerusalem, to inquire for and worship the promised Saviour was.

I. A solemn reproof of the apathy and inattention of the Jews to the word of God.

Strangers from a far country ought not to have had the start of the Jews, nor to have been the first to proclaim in Jerusalem, that the Messiah was born. The college of the Sanhedrim, and the priesthood of the temple, ought to have taken the lead in announcing “the fulness of time,” for it was not dimly pointed out in the Scriptures, nor faintly indicated by Providence. The sceptre had departed from Judah so far, that the coming of Shiloh might well have been thought near, by reflecting Jews; especially as the very Gentiles were then expecting the Messiah. But he was born before the Jews knew it. The consolation of Israel came, and not one priest of all the hierarchy was aware of his coming. It is true, they had not seen his star in common with the magi. That miraculous lamp had not flushed their firmament with its visible glories: but they had a more sure word of prophecy, that was a day star; to which, if they had taken heed, the fulness of time could not have come upon them so unawares.

But neither the scribes nor the priests took heed to the Scriptures; and, therefore, they were not permitted to see the star of Bethlehem, nor to hear the angels sing the incarnation anthem. Strangers from abroad, and shepherds at home, were preferred before them to witness these wonders. What a reproof for neglecting to search the Scriptures! And this sin God reproves still.

II. It was a prudent method of awakening the attention of the Jews to the advent of the Saviour.

They themselves had not marked the advancing shadow on the dial of prophecy, as it verged on the day of Christ; and it was not from every nation that they would have accepted a hint on the subject.

Had wise men from Rome been led by the star of Bethlehem, the Jews would have suspected them of some political errand, and refused to consult with them. Had wise men, however wise, come from Athens, they too would have been suspected of some sinister design against the religion or the liberties of the Jews. But wise men from the East could excite no suspicion; the Jews had nothing to fear from that quarter. Many of their own prophets had been there; and much, both of their hopes and history, was familiar to the orientals. For, although their fathers had sat down and wept by the rivers of Babylon, they had also boasted in the palaces of Babylon, that the star of Jacob would arise in Judah, and the messenger of the covenant come to his temple in Jerusalem.

Accordingly, the magi were well received, both by the king and the priests. Herod was courteous, and the Sanhedrim attentive, to the illustrious strangers, who thus proved how well their nation remembered the prophecies which the Hebrew captives had so often repeated. Thus, general attention was awakened to the coming of Christ, without awakening any national jealousy in the metropolis.

The prudence of the measure is still farther evident, in leading the wise men by a miraculous star. No symbol of the divine presence, except the shekinah of glory itself, could have so readily won the confidence of the Jews; for it agreed at once with the express language of their most popular prophecies, and with the aspect of the fiery pillar which had led their

fathers through the wilderness. In like manner, the object of the magi, to worship the Messiah, was calculated to please the Jews, because they expected that all nations would bow before him, and that Sheba and Seba should offer gifts. In a word, these men were the representatives of the wisest Gentiles of the three continents; and brought to confirm the fact that all nations were on the tiptoe of hope.

In Rome, Augustus Cæsar had just refused to be called lord, because an oracle had foretold that a Hebrew child should be his Lord. Virgil had lately paraphrased their prophecies, and applied them to Cæsar's expected son.

III. It was a pointed lesson to the Jews, on the spirit in which they should welcome the Saviour.

The magi came simply and solely for the purpose of worshipping him; not to hail him as the rival of Cæsar, nor to herald him as the warlike conqueror of the world, but to worship him as the Christ of God.

This was a lesson which the Jews had much need of at the time. They had forgotten every thing, or cared for nothing in the revealed character of the promised Messiah, but what seemed political and temporal. Warring under his victorious banner, not worshipping at his footstool, was all their ambition. Every spiritual object and emotion was lost sight of, or merged in the hope of vengeance and victory.

Nothing, therefore, could be more timely or tender, as a check to this vile and violent spirit, than the calm, and simple, and solemn errand of the magi. They avowed nothing, and designed nothing, but to worship the Saviour. Well, therefore, might this fine example have suggested to the Jews, that their spirit was not in harmony with the character or the mission of Christ, seeing it was so different from the spirit of the men who were evidently both taught and led by God.

IV. The visit was wisely ordered, to enable

Joseph and Mary to flee into Egypt from the wrath of Herod.

The journey from Bethlehem to Egypt was long and perilous, and both Joseph and Mary were poor—so poor, that their residence, even in the mean accommodations of the manger, had most likely exhausted all their money. They were, however, under the especial care of Providence, and that Providence *disdained* to allow them to become indebted even to the treasury of his own temple. God brought strangers from the east to minister to the wants of his Son by gifts and offerings, equal to all the demands of the journey to Egypt.

This was another mark of the divine displeasure against the priesthood. For their indifference to the time of the promised advent, they were all excluded from witnessing its glories, and now excluded from relieving its wants.

This, of course, they would not regret, as it saved their money. But, when God thus says to the worldly-minded, “If I were hungry I would not tell thee;” it is a brand of contempt for the selfish, as deep and undelible as omnipotence can stamp.

An example so fraught with instruction and reproof to the Jews, can hardly fail to furnish us with some important and impressive lessons. For it is,

I. An example of strong faith.

The magi worshipped the Saviour at a time, and under circumstances, when he was least likely to gain their homage.

Had the star appeared at a later period, and led them into his presence when his miracles were abroad upon all the elements of heaven, earth, and hell; or, when voices from the excellent glory were proclaiming his sonship; or, when he was transfigured on mount Tabor; or, when the universe was agitated by his agonies on Calvary; or, when he rose in immortal beauty from the tomb; or, when he ascended from Olivet on the wings of the wind,

to the eternal throne; at any of these places, on any of these august occasions, the worship of the wise men would not have been at all wonderful. They would have forfeited the title of wise, if they had not bowed the knee in adoration then; for even devils acknowledged his sonship and his Messiahship, when his miracles blazed around his ministry.

It was, however, whilst he was a babe, and in a manger, that the magi worshipped the Saviour. Nor does it appear that they either heard, or saw, or even heard of “the angel of the Lord;” or the “multitude of the heavenly host,” who had just before celebrated the incarnation with “Glory in the highest!” But none of these disadvantages prevented them from worshipping the babe of Bethlehem.

I do not forget that the enemies, and even some of the friends of the Saviour’s divinity, say, that the worship of the magi proves nothing in favour of this Godhead, because, (it is said,) worship and gifts would have been given by orientals to any king.

I do not, of course, dispute this well known fact; and had the worship of the magi been recorded by an uninspired pen, or by a man who knew not the real rank of the Lord of glory, I would lay no stress whatever upon the act. But, when Matthew calls it worship, who knew that Jesus was Immanuel, “God with us;” and when it is remembered that the evangelist was the amanuensis of the eternal Spirit, I deny that it was an act of mere oriental homage. I appeal also to the fact, that it is the same word which is used in the case of the magi, as in the case of the angels, when the Father said, on bringing his only-begotten Son into the world, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” Was that oriental homage? Let the prostrate armies of heaven answer the question, as they now cast their crowns at his feet, and, on the eternal throne, “honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.”

Besides, the magi themselves, were evidently taught by God to do what they did. And, when God teaches, the lesson is never untrue nor imperfect. Now, as he did not send his Son into the world to be the King of the Jews, in a temporal or political sense, it is certain and self-evident, that he would not have sent the magi to worship or visit the Saviour, as a temporal or political king. It is, therefore, to ascribe unto wise men a fool's errand—to say that they came to pay him mere regal honour.

I would be the last to lay undue stress upon circumstantial evidence, - on such a subject as the divinity of Christ. I readily grant that there is no necessity for drawing upon the worship of the magi for proofs. The worship paid to the Lamb in heaven, is complete and triumphant proof of his equality with the Father, because it is equal worship with the Father's. I dare not, however, overlook implied, any more than express, testimony, on such a subject. If, however, any one hesitate to adopt my conclusions from this act of adoration—and prefer to yield all his confidence to the songs of angels, and the sanctions of God, given to the claims of Immanuel,—I can, of course, have no objection.

II. The magi furnish us with an example of meek and prompt obedience to divine teaching.

I have, hitherto, merely assumed or asserted that they were taught of God:—and the single fact of the star having been prepared by God to lead them, more than implies that they too were prepared by God to follow it:—for the star did not, and could not, explain itself to them. Whatever, therefore, was its beauty or its brilliancy; its shape or its motion, all its *meaning* must have been learned from some one, or something above and beyond itself. Now oriental philosophy could not have taught the magi to follow it,—as the star of Christ.

I say—as “the star of Christ,” because there was that in the systematic astronomy of

their country and creed, which naturally gave to a new and strange star an aspect of political importance. It was, therefore, to the magi, then, what comets, until lately, were held here,—the harbinger of some great event.

In like manner, the most ancient of all the known Chaldean oracles ran thus,—“When thou seest a sacred fire of a new form, shining through the depths of space, then, hear the voice of that fire.”—STANLEY'S CHALD. PHILOS.

But whilst both these facts account, in some measure, for the attention which they gave to the star, as new and strange, neither of the facts, nor both, account for their knowledge of it, or their obedience to it, as the star of Christ. Thus, whilst there was enough in their philosophy to render the star attractive, there was nothing in it to stamp its real meaning, or its chief import.

Even Jewish tradition in the east, is not enough to account for the journey of the magi.

For, granting (what is highly probable) that neither Baalam's prophecy of the star of Jacob, nor the appeals made to it by the Jews in Babylon, were ever forgotten in Chaldaea,—the fact amounts only to this,—that the magi had some knowledge of the prophecies, and did expect the Messiah:—still, as the Jews, who had all the prophecies in their hands, and stronger motives to study them, did not understand the fulness of time, it is improbable that mere tradition, alone, could have made the magi wiser than the Jews. That they were more attentive to sacred tradition, than the Jews were to sacred Scripture, on this point, there can be no doubt: but it may, it ought to be doubted, whether there was tradition enough to teach them the precise time of Christ's birth: for that was not easily calculated to a moment, even upon the golden dial of direct prophecy. Seeing, therefore, that the star could not explain itself to be the star of Christ: and that tradition could not tell the exact day

of Christ, it is not only rational to conclude that whatever influence both had on the minds of the magi,—the Spirit of God was their real teacher in the whole matter.

For, the knowledge of Jewish tradition was not confined to them; nor is there any reason to suppose that they alone saw the star of Bethlehem. They alone followed it, however; and were, of all the men in the east, the only men, who were not disobedient to the heavenly vision. Another proof, that they were taught of God. In this also,—they are an example unto us. The indifference of others did not deter them from resolving to worship the Saviour: a journey of nearly one thousand miles, and lying chiefly through the desert, did not intimidate them: and when they reached Jerusalem, neither the splendours of Herod's court, nor the wonders of the Jewish temple, could divert them for a moment from their grand object. All their time and attention were concentrated in the one inquiry, "Where is he, &c." And when they were directed to Bethlehem—they were as ready to go as the star that led them. Instead of regretting to leave the court or the Sanhedrim, they "rejoiced with exceeding joy," to see the star again.

III. The magi furnish us with an example of practical love to the Saviour and his family.

They opened their treasures as well as their hearts to him, and presented gifts as well as worship. And what they gave, was really a free-gift. They did not require to be argued with or asked, before they administered to the wants of the holy family: but the moment their worship finished, their bounty began, and flowed as freely from their hands, as their prayers had from their hearts.

No wonder! they must have seen at a glance the extreme poverty of the holy family. Their dress, their dwelling, their every thing, indicated their wants. The sad sight of the Saviour in a manger, might well have made

them liberal, if they had been misers before. For, who would not open his treasures, however small, or large, were the Saviour personally in want again? Who would not share his plenty or his pittance with the mother of Jesus were she in poverty on earth?

Well! that Saviour says, "My mother and my brethren are they who hear the word of God, and do it." And some, yea many, "doers of the word" are, at this moment, as poor and as cold as the holy family in the manger of Bethlehem.

The pious poor are not, indeed, so attractive, or touching, as the holy family. Angels do not sing over the cottage of a poor Christian: but angels rejoiced over his repentance. No star points to his cellar or garret: but he who is both the morning star and the sun of righteousness, points to the sick and shivering inhabitants, and says, "Verily, inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye do it unto me." Here, then, is the manger still—the holy family in want still: and those are not wise men, whether from the east or the west, who cannot or do not recognize the Saviour in his suffering members, and relieve their wants.

This is not the poetry of benevolence, poetical as the references are. It is the sober, the solemn, the revealed fact and principle of Christian charity. It is the very disclosure of it that will be made from the judgment-seat, when the world is burning, and the destinies of eternity sealing. It will be the opening speech of the judge, at the grand assize of the universe, when the stewards of his bounty are brought to his bar, to give an account of their stewardship.

And this will be the final sentence, and the silencing appeal, against all unfaithful stewards. "I" (not you, poor brethren,) "was hungry, and ye gave me no meat," &c. Let us save ourselves from the untoward generation of the selfish.

EDITOR.

SECTION V.

OF THE CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS, AND HIS PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

1. AND now the blessed Saviour of the world began to do the work of his mission and our redemption: and because man had prevaricated all the divine commandments, to which all human nature respectively to the persons of several capacities was obliged, and therefore the whole nature was obnoxious to the just rewards of its demerits; first Christ was to put that nature he had assumed into a saveable condition, by fulfilling his Father's preceptive will, and then to reconcile it actually, by suffering the just deservings of its prevarications. He therefore addresses himself to all the parts of an active obedience, "and when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child," he exposed his tender body to the sharpness of the circumcising stone, and shed his blood in drops, giving an earnest of those rivers which he did afterwards pour out for cleansing all human nature, and extinguishing the wrath of God.

2. He that had no sin, nor was conceived by natural generation, could have no adherences to his soul or body, which needed to be pared away by a rite, and cleansed by a mystery: neither indeed do we find it expressed, that circumcision was ordained for abolition or pardon of original sin, (it is indeed presumed so,) but it was instituted to be a seal of a covenant between God and Abraham, and Abraham's posterity, "a seal of the righteousness of faith," and therefore was not improper for him to suffer who was the child of Abraham, and who was the prince of the covenant, and

"the author and finisher of that faith" which was consigned to Abraham in circumcision. But so mysterious were all the actions of Jesus, that this one served many ends. For, first, It gave demonstration of the verity of human nature; second, So he began to fulfil the law; third, And took from himself the scandal of uncircumcision, which would eternally have prejudiced the Jews against his entertainment and communion; fourth, And then he took upon him that name which declared him to be the Saviour of the world; which as it was consummated in the blood of the cross, so was it inaugurated in the blood of circumcision: For "when the eight days were accomplished for circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS."

3. But this holy family, who had laid up their joys in the eyes and heart of God, longed till they might be permitted an access to the temple, that there they might present the holy babe unto his Father; and indeed that he who had no other, might be brought to his own house. For although, while he was a child, he did differ nothing from a servant, yet he was the Lord of the place: It was his "Father's house," and he was "the Lord of all; and" therefore, "when the days of the purification were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord," to whom he was holy, as being the firstborn; the "first-born of his mother," the "only begotten Son of his Father," and "the firstborn of every creature." And they "did with him according

to the law of Moses, offering a pair of turtle-doves" for his redemption.

4. But there was no public act about this holy child, that was not attended by something miraculous and extraordinary. And at this instant the Spirit of God directed a holy person into the temple, that he might feel the fulfilling of a prophecy made to himself, that he should before his "death behold the Lord's CHRIST," and embrace "the glory and consolation of Israel and the light of the Gentiles" in his arms; for old "Simeon came by the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God," and prophesied, and spake glorious things of that child, and things sad and glorious concerning his mother; that the "child was set for the rising and falling of many in Israel, for a sign that should be spoken against;" and the bitterness of that contradiction should "pierce the heart" of the holy virgin mother like a sword, that her joy at the present accidents might be attempered with present revelation of her future trouble, and the excellent favour of being the mother of God might be crowned with the reward of martyrdom, and a mother's love be raised up to an excellency great enough to make her suffer the bitterness of being transfixed with his love and sorrow as with a sword.

5. But old Anna the prophetess came also in, full of years and joy, and found the reward of her long prayers and fasting in the temple; the long-looked-for redemption of Israel was now in the temple, and she saw with her eyes the light of the world, the heir of heaven, the long-looked-for Messiah, whom the nations had desired and expected till their hearts were faint, and their eyes dim with looking farther and apprehending greater distances. She also prophesied "and gave thanks unto the Lord. But Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him."

Considerations upon the Circumcision of the holy child Jesus.

1. When eight days were come, the holy Jesus was circumcised, and shed the first fruits of his blood, offering them to God like the prelibation of a sacrifice, and earnest of the great seas of effusion designed for his passion; not for the expiation of any stain himself had contracted, for he was spotless as the face of the sun, and had contracted no wrinkle from the aged and polluted brow of Adam; but it was an act of obedience, and yet of choice and voluntary susception, to which no obligation had passed upon him in the condition of his own person. For as he was included in the line of Abraham's posterity, and had put on the common outside of his nation, his parents had intimation enough to pass upon him the sacrament of the national covenant; and it became an act of excellent obedience: but because he was a person extraordinary, and exempt from the reasons of circumcision, and himself in person was to put an end to the rite, therefore it was an act of choice in him, and in both the capacities becomes a precedent of duty to us; in the first of obedience, in the second of humility.

2. But it deserves consideration, that the holy Jesus, who might have pleaded his exemption, especially in a matter of pain and dishonour, yet choose that way which was more severe and regular; so teaching us to be strict in our duties, and sparing in the rights of privilege and dispensation. We pretend any indisposition of body to excuse us from penal duties, from fasting, from going to church; and instantly we satisfy ourselves with saying, God will have mercy, and not sacrifice; so making ourselves judges of our own privileges, in which, commonly, we are parties against God, and therefore likely to pass unequal sentence. It is not an easy argument that will bring us up to

the severities and rigours of duty; but we snatch at occasions of dispensation, and therefore possibly may mistake the justice of the opportunities, by the importunities of our desires. However, if this too much easiness be in any case free from sin, yet in all cases it is an argument of infirmity, and the regular observation of the commandment is the surer way to perfection. For not every inconvenience of body is fit to be pleaded against the inconvenience of losing spiritual advantages, but only such, which, upon prudent account, does intrench upon the laws of charity; or such whose consequent is likely to be impediment of a duty in a greater degree of loss than the present omission. For the spirit being in many perfections more eminent than the body, all spiritual improvements have the same proportions: so that if we were just estimators of things, it ought not to be less than a great incommodity to the body, which we mean to prevent by the loss of a spiritual benefit, or the omission of a duty; he were very improvident, who would lose a finger for the good husbandry of saving a ducat; and it would be an unhandsome excuse from the duties of repentance, to pretend care of the body. The proportions and degrees of this are so nice, and of so difficult determination that men are more apt to untie the girdle of discipline, with the loose hands of dispensation and excuse, than to strain her too hard by the strictures and bindings of severity: but the error were the safer on this side.

3. The blessed Jesus refused not the signature of this bloody covenant, though it were the character of a sinner; and did sacramentally rescind the impure relics of Adam, and the contractions of evil customs; which was the greatest descent of humility that is imaginable, that he should put himself to pain to be reckoned amongst sinners, and to have their sacraments and their protestations, though his innocence was purer than the flames of cherubim. But

we use arts to seem more righteous than we are, desiring rather to be accounted holy, than to be so; as thinking the vanity of reputation more useful to us than the happiness of a remote and far distant eternity. But if (as it is said) circumcision was ordained, besides the signing of the covenant, to abolish the guilt of original sin, we are willing to confess that, it being no act of humiliation to confess a crime that all the world is equally guilty of, that could not be avoided by our timeliest industry, and that serves us for so many ends in the excuse and minoration of our actual impieties; so that as Diogenes trampled upon Plato's pride with a greater fastidiousness and humorous ostentation; so we do with original sin, declaim against it bitterly, to save the others harmless, and are free in the publication of this, that we may be instructed how to conceal the actual. The blessed Jesus had in him no principle of sin, original nor actual, and therefore this designation of his, in submitting himself to the bloody covenant of circumcision, which was a just express and sacramental abscission of it, was an act of glorious humility; yet our charging of ourselves so promptly with Adam's fault, whatever truth it may have in the strictness of theology, hath (*forsitan*) but an ill end in morality; and so I now consider it without any reflection upon the precise question.

4. For though the fall of Adam lost to him all those supernatural assistances which God put into our nature by way of grace, yet it is by accident that we are more prone to many sins than we are to virtue. Adam's sin did decompose his understanding and affections; and every sin we do does still make us more unreasonable, more violent, more sensual, more apt still to the multiplication of the same or the like actions: the first rebellion of the inferior faculties against the will and understanding, and every victory the flesh gets over the spirit, makes the inferior insolent, strong, tumultuous,

domineering, and triumphant, upon the proportionable ruins of the spirit; blinding our reason and binding our will; and all these violations of our powers are increased by the perpetual ill customs, and false principles, and ridiculous guises of the world, which make the later ages to be worse than the former; unless some other accident do intervene to stop the ruin and declension of virtue; such as God's judgments, the sending of prophets, new imposition of laws, messages from heaven, diviner institutions, such as in particular was the great discipline of Christianity. And even in this sense here is origination enough for much sin, and much impairing of the reasonable faculties of human souls, without charging our faults upon Adam.

5. But besides this, God, who hath propounded to man glorious conditions, and designed him to an excellent state of immortality, hath required of him such a duty, as shall put man to labour; and present to God a service of a free and difficult obedience. For therefore God hath given us laws, which come cross, and are restraints to our natural inclinations, that we may part with something in the service of God which we value. For, although this is nothing in respect of God, yet to man it is the greatest he can do. What thanks were it to man to obey God in such things as he would do, though he were not commanded? But to leave all our own desires, and to take up objects of God's propounding contrary to our own, and desires against our nature, this is that which God designed as a sacrifice of ourselves to him. And therefore God hath made many of his laws to be prohibitions in the matter of natural pleasure, and restraints of our sensitive appetite. Now this having become the matter of the divine laws, (that we should in many parts and degrees abstain from what pleases our senses,) by this supervening accident, it happens that we are very hardly

weaned from sin, but most easily tempted to a vice. And then we think we have reason to lay the fault upon original sin and natural aversion from goodness, when this inclination to vice is but accidental, and occasional, upon the matter and sanction of the laws. Our nature is not contrary to all virtue; for the laws of nature and right reason do not only oblige us, but incline us to it; but the instances of some virtues are made to come cross to our nature, that is, to our natural appetites; by reason of which it comes to pass, that (as St. Paul says) "we are by nature the children of wrath;" meaning, that by our natural inclinations we are disposed to contradict those laws which lay fetters upon them, and apt to satisfy "the lusts of the flesh;" for these he there instances.

6. But in things intellectual and spiritual, (where neither the one nor the other satisfy the sensual part) we are indifferent to virtue or to vice, and when we do amiss, it is wholly and in all degrees inexcusably our own fault. In the old law, when it was a duty to swear by the God of Israel in solemn causes, men were apt enough to swear by him only; and that, sometimes, the Israelites did swear by "the queen of heaven," was, by ill example, and desires to comply with the neighbour nations, whose daughters they sometime married, or whose arms they feared, or whose friendship they desired, or with whom they did negotiate. It is indifferent to us to love our fathers and to love strangers, according as we are determined by custom or education. Nay, for so much of it as is natural and original, we are more inclined to love them than to disrepute them; and if we disobey them, it is when any injunction of theirs comes cross to our natural desires and purposes. But if from our infancy we be told concerning a stranger that he is our father, we frame our affections to nature, and our nature to custom and education, and are as apt to love him who

is not, and yet is said to be, as him who is said not to be, and yet indeed is our natural Father.

7. And in sensual things, if God had commanded polygamy or promiscuous concubinage, or unlimited eatings and drinkings, it is not to be supposed but, that we should have been ready enough to have obeyed God in all such impositions : as the sons of Israel never murmured when God bade them borrow jewels and earrings, and spoil the Egyptians : but because God restrained these desires, our duties are the harder, because they are fetters to our liberty, and contradictions to those natural inclinations, which also are made more active by evil custom and defective education. From which premises we shall observe, in order to practice, that sin creeps upon us in our education so softly and undiscernably, that we mistake the cause of it ; and yet so prevalently and effectually, that we judge it to be our very nature, and charge it upon Adam, to lessen the imputation upon us, or to increase the license or the confidence : when every one of us is the Adam, the “ man of sin,” and the parent of our own impurities. For it is notorious, that our own iniquities do so discompose our nature, and evil customs and examples do so encourage impiety, and the law of God enjoins such virtues as do violence to nature, that our proclivity to sin is occasioned by the accident, and is caused by ourselves ; for whatever mischief Adam did to us, we do more to ourselves. We are taught to be revengeful in our cradles, and to strike our neighbour as a means to still our frowardness, and to satisfy our wranglings. Our nurses teach us to know the greatness of our birth, or the riches of our inheritance, or they learn us to be proud, or to be impatient, before they learn us to know God, or to say our prayers. And then, because the use of reason comes at no definite time, but insensibly and devisably, we are permitted such acts with impunity too long ; deferring to repute them to be sins, till

the habit is grown strong, natural and masculine : and because from the infancy it began in inclinations, and tender overtures and slighter actions, Adam is laid in the fault, and original sin did all : and we therefore confess this, that our faults may seem the less, and the misery be pretended natural, that it may be thought to be irremediable, and that therefore we are not engaged to endeavour a cure : so that the confession of our original sin, is no imitation of Christ’s humility in suffering circumcision, but too often an act of pride, carelessness, ignorance, and security.

8. At the circumcision his parents imposed the holy name told to the virgin by the angel. “ his name was called JESUS : a name above every name. For in old times God was known by names of power, of nature, of majesty : but his name of mercy was reserved till now, when God did purpose to pour out the whole treasure of his mercy, by the mediation and ministry of his holy Son. And because God gave to the holy child the name in which the treasures of mercy were deposited, and exalted “ this name above all names,” we are taught that the purpose of his counsel was, to exalt and magnify his mercy above all his other works, he being delighted with this excellent demonstration of it, in the mission, and manifestation, and crucifixion of his Son. He hath thus changed the ineffable name into a name utterable by man, and desirable by all the world : the majesty is all arrayed in robes of mercy ; the Tetragrammaton, or adorable mystery of the patriarchs, is made fit for pronunciation and expression, when it becometh the name of the Lord’s CHRIST. And if JEHOVAH be full of majesty and terror, the name JESUS is full of sweetness and mercy. It is GOD clothed with circumstances of facility, and opportunities of approximation. The great and highest name of GOD could not be pronounced truly, till it came to be finished with a letter that made up

the name given by this angel to the holy child; nor God received or entertained by men, till he was made human and sensible by the adoption of a sensitive nature, like vowels pronounceable by the intermixture of a consonant. Thus was his person made tangible, and his name utterable, and his mercy brought home to our necessities, and the mystery made explicate, at the circumcision of this holy babe.

9. But now God's mercy was at *full* sea; now was the time when God made no reserves to the effusion of his mercy. For to the patriarchs and persons of eminent sanctity and employment in the elder ages of the world, God, according to the degrees of his manifestation or present purpose, would give them *one* letter of this ineffable name. For the reward that Abraham had in the change of his name, was, that he had the honour done him to have one [of the letters of "Jehovah"] put into it; and so had Joshua, when he was a type of Christ, and the prince of the Israelitish armies; and when God took away one of these letters, it was a curse. But now he communicated all the whole name to this holy child, and put a letter *more* to it, to signify that he was the glory of God, the express image of his Father's person, God eternal; and then manifested to the world in his humanity, that thus all the intelligent world who expected beatitude, and had treasured all their hopes in the ineffable name of God, might find them all with ample returns in this name of Jesus, which God hath exalted above every name, even above that by which God in the Old Testament did represent the greatest awfulness of his own majesty. This miraculous name is above all the powers of magical enchantments, the nightly rites of sorcerers, the secrets of Memphis, the drugs of Thessaly, the silent and mysterious murmurs of the wise Chaldees, and the spells of Zoroaster. This is the name at which the devils did tremble, and pay their enforced and involuntary

adorations, by confessing the divinity, and quitting their possessions and usurped habitations. If our prayers be made in this name, God opens the windows of heaven and rains down benediction: by the mention of this name the blessed apostles, and Hermione the daughter of St. Philip, and Philotheus the son of Theophila, and St. Hilarion, and St. Paul the Eremit, and innumerable other lights who followed hard after the sun of righteousness, wrought great and prodigious miracles; signs, and wonders, and healings, were done by the name of the holy child Jesus. This is the name which we should engrave in our hearts, and write upon our foreheads, and pronounce with our most harmonious accents, and rest our faith upon, and place our hopes in, and love with the overflowings of charity, and joy, and adoration. And as the revelation of this name satisfied the hopes of all the world, so it must determine our worshippings, and the addresses of our exterior and interior religion; it being that name whereby God and God's mercies are made present to us, and proportionate objects of our religion and affections.

THE PRAYER.

Most holy and ever blessed Jesus, who art infinite in essence, glorious in mercy, mysterious in thy communications, affable and presential in the descents of thy humanity; I adore thy glorious name, whereby thou hast shut up the abysses, and opened the gates of heaven, restraining the power of hell, and discovering and communicating the treasures of thy Father's mercies. O Jesu, be thou a Jesus unto me, and save me from the precipices and ruins of sin, from the expresses of thy Father's wrath, from the miseries and insufferable torments of accursed spirits, by the power of thy majesty, by

the sweetnesses of thy mercy, and sacred influences, and miraculous glories of thy name. I adore and worship thee in thy excellent obedience and humility, who hast submitted thy innocent and spotless flesh to the bloody covenant of circumcision. Teach me to practise so blessed and holy a precedent, that I may be humble and obedient to thy sacred laws, severe and regular in my religion, mortified in my body and spirit, of circumcised heart and tongue; that what thou didst represent in symbol and mystery, I may really express in the exhibition of an exemplary, pious, and mortified life, cutting off all excrescences of my spirit, and whatsoever may minister to the flesh, or any of its ungodly desires; that now thy holy name is called upon me, I may do no dishonour to the name, nor scandal to the institution, but may do thee honour, and worship, and adorations of a pure religion, O most holy and ever blessed Jesu. Amen.

DISCOURSE II.

Of the Virtue of Obedience.

1. THERE are certain excellences either of habit or consideration, which spiritual persons use to call *general* ways; being a dispersed influence into all the parts of good life, either directing the single actions to the right end, or managing them with right instruments, and adding special excellences and formalities to them, or morally inviting to the repetition of them; but they are like general medicaments in physic, or the prime instruments in mathematical discipline: such are the consideration of the divine presence, the example of Jesus, right intention; and such also is the virtue of obedience, which perfectly unites our actions to

God, and conforms us to the divine will, which is the original of goodness, and sanctifies and makes a man an holocaust to God, which contains in it, eminently, all other graces, but especially those graces whose essence consists in a conformity of a part or the whole, (such are faith, humility, patience, and charity;) which gives quietness and tranquillity to the spirit, and is an antepast of paradise, (where their jubilee is the perpetual joys of obedience, and their doing is the enjoying the divine pleasure;) which adds an excellency and lustre to pious actions, and hallows those which are indifferent, and lifts up some actions from their unhallowed nature to circumstances of good and of acceptance. If a man says his prayers, or communicates out of custom, or without intuition of the precept and divine commandment, the act is like a ship returning from her voyage without her venture and her burthen, as unprofitable as without stowage: but if God commands us either to eat or to abstain, to sleep or to be waking, to work or to keep a Sabbath; these actions, which are naturally neither good nor evil, are sanctified by the obedience, and ranked amongst actions of the greatest excellency. And this also was it which made Abraham's offer to kill his son, and the Israelites spoiling the Egyptians, to become acts laudable, and not unjust: they were acts of obedience, and therefore had the same formality and essence with actions of the most spiritual devotions. God's command is all our rule for practice.

2. But by obedience I do not here mean the exterior execution of the work; for so, obedience is no grace distinct from the acting any or all the commandments: but besides the doing of the thing, (for that also must be presupposed) it is a sacrifice of our proper will to God, a choosing the duty because God commands it. For beasts also carry burthens and do our commands by compulsion: and the fear of slaves

and the rigour of task-masters made the number of bricks to be completed, when Israel groaned and cried to God for help. But sons that labour under the sweet paternal sway of their fathers, and the influence of love, they love the precept, and do the imposition, with the same purposes and compliant affections with which the fathers made it. When Christ commanded us to renounce the world, there were some that did think it was a hard saying, and do so still; and the young rich man forsook him upon it: but Ananias and Sapphira, upon whom some violences were done by custom, or the excellent sermons of the apostles, sold their possessions too; but it was so against their will, that they retained part of it: but St. Paul did not only forsake all his secular fortunes, but counted all to be dross that he might gain Christ; he gave his will, made an offering of that, as well as of his goods, choosing the act which was enjoined. This was the obedience the holy Jesus paid to his heavenly Father, so voluntary, that it was "meat to him to do his Father's will."

3. And this was intended always by God, "[My son, give me thy heart:]" and particularly by the holy Jesus; for in the saddest instance of all his precepts, even that of suffering persecution, we are commanded to "rejoice and to be exceeding glad." And so did those holy martyrs in the primitive ages, who upon just grounds, when God's glory or the edification of the church had interest in it, they offered themselves to tyrants, and dared the violence of the most cruel and howelless hangmen. And this is the best oblation we can present to God. "To offer gold is a present fit to be made by young beginners in religion, not by men in christianity; yea, Crates the Theban threw his gold away, and so did Antisthenes: but to offer our will to *will*, to give ourselves, is the act of an apostle, the proper act of Christians." And therefore when the apostles made challenge of

a reward for leaving all their possessions, Christ makes no reply to the instance, nor says, "you who have left all," but, "you who have followed me in the regeneration, shall sit upon twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel:" meaning, that the quitting the goods was nothing; but the obedience to Christ, that they followed Jesus in the regeneration, going themselves in pursuit of him, and giving themselves to him, that was it which entitled them to a throne.

4. And this therefore God enjoins, that our offerings to him be entire and complete, that we pay him a holocaust, that we do his work without murmuring, and that his burthen may become easy, when it is born up by the wings of love, and alacrity of spirit. For in effect this obedience of the will is, in true speaking and strict theology, nothing else but that charity which gives excellency to alms, and energy to faith, and acceptance to all graces. But I shall reduce this to particular and more minute considerations.

5. First, We shall best know that our will is in the obedience, by our prompt undertaking, by our cheerful managing, by our swift execution: for all degrees of delay are degrees of unwillingness. And since time is extrinsical to the act, and alike to every part of it, nothing determines an action but the opportunity without, and the desires and willingness within. And therefore he who deliberates beyond his first opportunity, and exterior determination and appointment of the act, brings fire and wood, but wants a *lamb* for the sacrifice; and unless he offer up his Isaac, his beloved will, he hath no service prepared for God's acceptance. He that does not repent to-day, puts it to the question whether he will repent at all or no. He that defers restitution when all the circumstances are fitted, is not yet resolved upon the duty. And when he does it, if he does it against his will, he does but do honorary

penance with a paper upon his hat, and a taper in his hand ; it may satisfy the law, but not satisfy his conscience ; it neither pleases himself, and less pleases God. A sacrifice without a heart was a sad and ominous presage in the superstition of Roman Augurs, and so it is in the service of God ; for what the exhibition of the work is to man, that the presentation of the will is to God. It is but a cold charity to a naked beggar to say, " God help thee," and do nothing ; give him clothes, and he feels your charity : but God, who is the searcher of the heart, his apprehension of actions relative to himself, is of the inward motions and addresses of the will ; and without this, our exterior services are like the paying of a piece of money in which we have defaced the image, it is not current.

6. Secondly, But besides the willingness to do the acts of express command, the readiness to do the intimations and tacit significations of God's pleasure, is the best testimony in the world that our will is in the obedience. Thus did the holy Jesus undertake a nature of infirmity, and suffer a death of shame and sorrow, and became obedient from the circumcision even unto the death of the cross : not staying for a command, but because it was his Father's pleasure mankind should be redeemed. For before the susception of it, he was not a person amenable to a command : it was enough that he understood the inclinations and designs of his Father's mercies. And therefore God hath furnished us with instances of uncommanded piety, to be a touchstone of our obedience. He that does but his endeavour about the express commands, hath a bridle in his mouth, and is restrained by violence : but a willing spirit is like a greedy eye, devours all it sees, and hopes to make some proportionable returns and compensations of duty for his infirmity, by taking in the intimations of God's pleasure. When God commands chastity, he that undertakes a holy

celibate hath great obedience to the command of chastity. God bids us give alms of our increase ; he obeys this with great facility that " sells all his goods, and gives them to the poor." And, provided our hastiness to snatch at too much does not make us let go our duty, like the indiscreet loads of too forward persons, too big, or too inconvenient and uncombined, there is not in the world a greater probation of our prompt obedience, than when we look farther than the precise duty, swallowing that and more with our ready and hopeful purposes : nothing being so able to do miracles as love, and yet nothing being so certainly accepted as love, though it could do nothing in productions and exterior ministeries.

7. Thirdly, But God requires that our obedience should have another excellency to make it a becoming present to the divine acceptance ; our *understanding* must be sacrificed too, and become an ingredient of our obedience. We must also believe that whatsoever God commands is most fitting to be commanded, is most excellent in itself, and the best for us to do. The first gives our affections and desires to God, and this also gives our reason ; and is thus a perfection of obedience not communicable to the duties we owe to man. For God only is Lord of this faculty, and, being the fountain of all wisdom, therefore commands our understanding, because he alone can satisfy it. We are bound to obey human laws ; but not bound to think the laws we live under, the most prudent constitution in the world. But God's commandments are not only " a lantern to our feet," and " a light unto our paths," but a rule to our reason, and a satisfaction to our understandings, as being instruments of our address to God, and conveyances of his grace, and manuductions to eternity. And therefore St. John Clinacus defines obedience to be, " an unexamined and unquestioned motion, a voluntary death and sepulture of the will, a life without

curiosity, a laying aside our own discretion in the midst of the riches of the most excellent understandings."

8. And certainly there is not in the world a greater strength against temptations than is deposited in an obedient understanding, because that only can regularly produce the same affections, it admits of fewer degrees, and an infrequent alteration. But the actions proceeding from the appetite, as it is determined by any other principle than a satisfied understanding, have their heightnings and their declensions, and their changes and mutations, according to a thousand accidents. Reason is more lasting than desire, and with fewer means to be tempted; but affections and motions of appetite, as they are procured by anything, so may they expire by as great variety of causes. And therefore to serve God by way of understanding is surer, and in itself, unless it be by the accidental increase of degrees, *greater* than to serve him upon the motion and principle of passions and desires; though this be fuller of comfort and pleasure than the other. When Lot lived amongst the impure Sodomites, where his righteous soul was in a continual agony, he had few exterior incentives to a pious life, nothing to enkindle the sensible flame of burning desires toward piety; but in the midst of all the discouragements of the world, nothing was left him but the way and precedency of a truly-informed reason and conscience. Just so is the way of those wise souls, who live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, where piety is out of countenance, where austerity is ridiculous, religion under persecution, no examples to lead us on; there the understanding is left to be the guide, and it does the work the surest, for this makes the duty of many to be certain, regular, and chosen, constant, integral, and perpetual: but this way is like the life of an unmarried or a retired person, less of grief in it, and less of joy. But the way

of serving God with the affections, and with the pleasures and entertainments of excitement, is the way of the more passionate and imperfect, not in a man's power to choose or to procure; but comes by a thousand chances, meeting with a soft nature, credulous or weak, easy or ignorant, softened with fears or invited by forward desires.

9. Those that did live amidst the fervours of the primitive charity, and were warmed by their fires, grew inflamed by contact and vicinity to such burning and shining lights. And they therefore grew to high degrees of piety, because then every man made judgment of his own actions by the proportions which he saw before him, and believed all descents from those greater examples, to be so many degrees from the rule. And he that lives in a college of devout persons will compare his own actions with the devotions and customs of that society, and not with the remissness of persons he hears of in story, but what he sees and lives with. But if we live in an age of indevotion, we think ourselves well assailed if we be warmer than their ice; every thing which is above our example being eminent and conspicuous, though it be but like the light of a glow-worm or the sparkling of a diamond, yet if it be in the midst of darkness, it is a goodly beauty. This I call the way of serving God by desires and affections: and this is altered by example, by public manners, by external works, by the assignment of offices, by designation of conventions for prayer, by periods and revolutions of times of duty, by hours and solemnities; so that a man shall owe his piety to these chances, which although they are graces of God and instruments of devotion, yet they are not always in our power; and therefore they are but accidental ministeries of a good life, and the least constant or durable. But when the principle of our piety is a conformity of our understanding to God's laws, when we are instructed what to do, and there-

fore do it because we are satisfied it is most excellent to obey God; this will support our piety against objections, and lead it on in despite of disadvantages; this chooses God with reason, and is not determined from without: and as it is in some degree necessary for all times, so it is the greatest security against the change of laws and princes, and religions and ages: when all the incentives of affection and exterior determinations of our piety shall cease, and perhaps all external offices, and "the daily sacrifice," and piety itself shall fail from the face of the land; then the obedience founded in the understanding is the only lasting strength left us to make retreat to, and to secure our conditions. Thus from the composition of the will and affections with our exterior acts of obedience to God, our obedience is made willing, swift, and cheerful; but from the composition of the understanding, our obedience becomes strong, sincere, and persevering; and this is that which St. Paul calls "our reasonable service."

10. Fourthly, To which if we add that our obedience must be universal, we have all the qualifications which make the duty to be pious and prudent. The meaning is, that we obey God in all his sanctions, though the matter be in common account small and inconsiderable, and give no indulgence to ourselves to recede from the rule in any matter whatsoever. For the minute act of obedience is worth our attention, as being by God esteemed the trial of our obedience in a greater affair. "He that is unjust in a little will be unjust in a greater," said our blessed Saviour. And since to God all matter is alike, and no more accrues to him in an hecatomb than in a piece of gum, in an ascetic severity than in a secular life, God regards not the matter of a precept, but the obedience, which in all instances is the same; and he that will prevaricate when the matter is trifling, and by consequence the temptations to

it weak, and impotent, and soon confuted, will think he may better be excused when the temptations are violent and importunate, as it commonly happens in affairs of greater importance. He that will lie to save sixpence, will not stick at it when a thousand pound is the purchase; and possibly there is more contempt and despite done to the divine authority, when we disobey it in particulars wherein the obedience is most easy, and the temptations less troublesome: I do not say there is more injustice or more malice in a small disobedience than in a greater, but there is either more contempt, or more negligence and dissolution of discipline, than in the other.

11. And it is no small temptation of the devil, when he solicits us not to be curious of scruples and grains, nor to disturb our peace for lighter disobediences: persuading us that something must be indulged to public manners, something to the civilities of society, something to nature, and to the approaches of our passions, and the motions of our first desires; but that "we be not over-righteous." And true it is, that sometimes such surreptions and smaller indecencies are therefore pardoned and lessened almost to a nullity, because they dwell in the confines of things lawful and honest, and are not so notorious as to be separated from permissions by any public, certain, and universal cognizance, and therefore may pass upon a good man sometimes without observation. But it is a temptation when we think of neglecting them by a predetermined incuriousness, upon pretence they are small. But this must be reduced to more regular conclusions.

12. First, Although smaller disobediences, expressed in slight misbecoming actions, when they come by surprise and sudden invasion, are, through the mercies of God, dashed in the very approach, their bills of accusation thrown out, and they not esteemed as competent instruments of separation from God's love; yet

when a smaller sin comes by design, and is acted with knowledge and deliberation, (for then it is properly an act of disobedience) *malitia supplet defectum ætatis*, the malice of the agent heightens the smallness of the act, and makes up the iniquity. To drink liberally once, and something more freely than the strict rules of Christian sobriety and temperance permit, is pardoned the easier, when without deliberation and by surprise the person was abused, who intended not to transgress a minute, but by little and little was mistaken in his proportions: but if a man by design shall estimate his draughts and his good fellowship, and shall resolve upon a little intemperance, thinking, because it is not very much, it is therefore none at all, that man hath mistaken himself into a crime; and although a little wound upon the finger is very curable, yet the smallest prick upon the heart is mortal: so is a design and purpose of the smallest disobedience in its formality, as malicious and destructive, as in its matter it was pardonable and excusable.

13. Secondly, Although every lesser disobedience, when it comes singly, destroys not the love of God; (for although it may lessen the habit, yet it takes not away its natural being, nor interrupts its acceptance, lest all the world should in all instants of time be in a damnable condition) yet when these smaller obliquities are repeated, and no repentance intervenes, this repetition combines and unites the lesser till they be concentrated, and by their accumulation make a crime: and therefore a careless reiterating and an incurious walking in misbecoming actions is deadly and damnable in the result, though it was not so much at the setting forth. Every idle word is to be accounted for, but we hope in much mercy; and yet he that gives himself over to immoderate talking will swell his account to a vast and mountainous proportion, and call all the lesser

escapes into a stricter judgment. He that extends his recreation an hour beyond the limits of Christian prudence, and the analogy of its severity and employment, is accountable to God for that improvidence and waste of time; but he that shall mis-spend a day, and because that sin is not scandalous like adultery, or clamorous like oppression, or unusual like bestiality, or crying for revenge like detaining the portion of orphans, shall therefore mis-spend another day, without revocation of the first by an act of repentance and redemption of it, and then shall throw away a week, still adding to the former account upon the first stock, will at last be answerable for a habit of idleness, and will have contracted a vain and impertinent spirit. For since things which, in their own kind are lawful, become sinful by the degree; if the degree be heightened by intention, or become great like a heap of sand by the accumulation of innumerable atoms of dust, the actions are as damnable as any of the natural daughters and productions of hell, when they are entertained without scruple, and renewed without repentance, and continued without dereliction.

14. Thirdly, Although some inadvertencies of our life, and lesser disobediences, accidentally become less hurtful, and because they are entailed upon the infirmities of a good man, and the less wary customs and circumstances of society, are also consistent with the state of grace; yet all affection to the smallest sins becomes deadly and damnable. "He that loves his danger shall perish in it," saith the wise man; and every friendly entertainment of an indecency invites in a greater crime: for no man can love a small sin; but there are in the greater crimes of its kind more desirable flatteries, and more satisfactions of sensuality than in those suckers and sprigs of sin. At first a little disobedience is proportionable to a man's temper, and his conscience is not fitted

to the bulk of a rude crime: but when a man hath accepted the first insinuation of delight and swallowed it, that little sin is past, and needs no more to dispute for entrance; then the next design puts in and stands in the same probability to succeed the first, and greater than the first had to make the entry. However, to love anything that God hates is direct enmity with him; and whatsoever the instance be, it is inconsistent with charity, and therefore incompetent with the state of grace. So that if the sin be small, it is not a small thing that thou hast given thy *love* to it; every such person perishes like a fool, cheaply and ingloriously.

15. Fourthly, But it also concerns the niceness and prudence of obedience to God, to stand at farther distance from a vice than we usually attend to. For many times virtue and vice differ but one degree, and the neighbourhood is so dangerous, that he who desires to secure his obedience and duty to God will remove farther from the danger. For there is a rule of justice, to which if one degree more of severity be added, it degenerates into cruelty; and a little more mercy is remissness and want of discipline; introduces licentiousness and becomes unmercifulness as to the public, and unjust as to the particular. Now this consideration is heightened, if we observe that virtue and vice consist not in an indivisible point; but there is a latitude for either, which is not to be judged by any certain rules drawn from the nature of the thing, but to be estimated in proportion to the persons and other accidental circumstances. He that is burthened with a great charge, for whom he is bound under a curse and the crime of infidelity to provide, may go farther in the acquisition, and be more provident in the use of his money, than those persons for whom God hath made more ample provisions, and hath charged them with fewer burthens and engagements economical.

And yet no man can say, that just beyond such a degree of care stands covetousness, and thus far on this side is carelessness; and a man may be in the confines of death before he be aware. Now the only way to secure our obedience and duty in such cases is, to remove farther off, and not to dwell upon the confines of the enemies' country. My meaning is, that it is not always prudent nor safe for a man to do whatsoever he lawfully may do.

16. For besides that we are often mistaken in our judgments concerning the lawfulness or unlawfulness of actions, he that will do all that he thinks he may lawfully do, if ever he does change his station and increase in giving himself liberty, will quickly arrive at doing things unlawful. It is good to keep a reserve of our liberty, and to restrain ourselves within bounds narrower than the largest sense of the commandment, that when our affections wander and enlarge themselves, (as sometime or other they will do) then they may enlarge beyond the ordinary, and yet be within the bounds of lawfulness. That of which men make a scruple and a question at first, after an habitual resolution of it stirs no more; but then their question is of something beyond it. When a man hath accustomed himself to pray seven times a day, it will a little trouble his peace if he omits one or two of those times; but if it be resolved then, that he may please God with praying devoutly though but thrice every day, after he hath digested the scruples of this first question, possibly some accidents may happen that will put his conscience and reason to dispute, whether three times be indispensably necessary: and still if he be far within the bounds of lawfulness, it is well; but if he be at the *margin* of it, his next remove may be into dissolution and unlawfulness. He that resolves to gain all that he may lawfully this year, it is odds but next year he will be tempted to gain something unlawfully. He that, be-

cause a man may be innocently angry, will never restrain his passion, in a little time will be intemperate in his anger, and mistake both his object and the degree. Thus facetiousness and urbanity, entertained with an open hand, will turn into jestings that are uncomely.

17. If you will be secure, remove your tent, dwell farther off. God hath given us more liberty than we may safely use; and although God is so gracious as to comply much with our infirmities, yet if we do so too, as God's goodness in indulging liberty to us was to prevent our sinning, our complying with ourselves will engage us in it: but if we imprison and confine our affections into a narrower compass, then our extravagances may be imperfect, but will not easily be criminal. The dissolution of a scrupulous and strict person is not into a vice, but into a less degree of virtue: he that makes a conscience of loud laughter, will not easily be drawn into the wantonness of balls and revellings, and the longer and more impure carnivals. This is the way to secure our obedience; and no men are so curious of their health, as they that are scrupulous of the air they breathe in.

But now for our obedience to man; that hath distinct considerations, and apart.

18. First, All obedience to man is for God's sake; for God imprinting his authority upon the sons of men, like the Sun reflecting upon a cloud, produces a parhelius, or a representation of his own glory, though in great distances and imperfection: it is the divine authority, though characterized upon a piece of clay, and imprinted upon a weak and imperfect man. And therefore obedience to our superiors must be universal in respect of persons; "to all our superiors." This precept is expressly apostolical, "Be subject to every constitution and authority of man for the Lord's sake:" It is for God's sake, and therefore to every one, "Whether it be to the king, as supreme, or to his ministers

in subordination." That is for civil government. For ecclesiastical this; "obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account." All upon whom any ray of the divine authority is imprinted, whether it be in greater or smaller characters, are in proportion to their authority to be obeyed; "to all upon the same ground;" for there is no power but of God. So that no infirmity of person, no undervaluing circumstance, no exterior accident is an excuse for disobedience: and to obey the divine authority, as passing through the dictates of a wise, excellent, and prudent governor, but to neglect the impositions of a looser head, is to worship Christ only upon the mount Tabor, and in the glories of his transfiguration, and to despise him upon mount Calvary, and in the clouds of his inglorious and humble passion; "not only to the good and gentle," (so St. Peter,) "but to the harsh and rigid." And it was by divine providence, that all those many and stricter precepts of obedience to governors in the New Testament, were verified by instances of tyrants, persecutors, idolaters, and heathen princes; and for others amongst whom there was a variety of disposition, there is no variety of imposition, but all excuses are removed, and all kinds of governors drawn into the sanction and sacredness of authority.

19. Secondly, Not only "to all governors," but "in all things" we must obey. "Children, obey your parents in all things:" and "servants, obey your masters in all things." And this also is upon the same ground; do it "as unto Christ; as unto the Lord, and not unto men." But then, this restrains the universality of obedience, that it may run within its own channel; "as unto the Lord," therefore nothing *against* the divine commandment. For if God speaks to us by man, transmitting laws for conservation of civil society, for eccle-

siastical policy, for justice and personal advantages, for the interests of virtue and religion, for discountenancing of vice, we are to receive it with the same veneration as if God spake himself to us immediately. But, because by his terror upon mount Sinai, he gave testimony how great favour it is to speak to us by the ministration of our brethren it were a strange impudence, when we desire a proportionable and gentle instrument of divine commands, we should for this very proportion despise the minister; like the frogs in the apologue insulting their wooden king. But then if anything come *contrary* to a divine law, know "it is the voice of Jacob," the supplanter, not of the right heir; and though we must obey man for God's sake, yet we must never disobey God for man's sake. In all things else we find no exception; but according as the superiors intend the obligation, and express it by the signature of laws, customs, interpretations, permissions, and dispensations, that is, so far as the law is obligatory in general, and not dispensed with in particular, so far obedience is a duty in all instances of acts, where no *sin* is ingredient.

20. Thirdly, And here also the smallness and cheapness of the duty does not tolerate disobedience; for the despising the smallest injunction is an act of as formal and direct rebellion, as when the prevarication is in a higher instance. It is here as in divine laws, but yet with some difference: for small things do so little co-operate to the end of human laws, that a smaller reason does by way of interpretation and tacit permission dispense, than can in a divine sanction, though of the lowest offices. Because God commands duties not for the end to which they of themselves do co-operate, but to make sacred his authority, and that we by our obedience may confess him to be Lord. But in human laws the authority is made sacred, not primarily for itself, but

principally, that the laws made in order to the conservation of societies may be observed. So that in the neglect of the smallest of divine ordinances we as directly oppose God's great purpose and intention as in greater matters: God's dominion and authority (the conservation of which was his principal intention) is alike neglected. But in omitting a human imposition of small concernment, the case is different; it is certain there is not any considerable violence done to the public interest by a contemptible omission of a law. The thing is not small, if the commonwealth be not safe, and all her great ends secured; but if they be, then the authority is inviolate, unless a direct contempt were intended; for its being was in order to that end, not for itself, as it is in the case of divine laws, but that the public interest be safe.

21. And therefore as great matters of human laws may be omitted for great reasons, so may smaller matters for smaller reasons, but never *without* reason; for, causelessly and contemptuously are all one. But in the application of the particulars, either the laws themselves, or custom, or the prudence of a sincere righteous man, or of a wise and disinterested person, is to be the judge. But let no man's confidence increase from the smallness of the matter, to a contempt of the authority; for there are some sins whose malignity is accidentally increased by the slightness of the subject matter; such are blasphemy, perjury, and the contempt of authority. To blaspheme God for the loss of an asper or a penny, to be forsworn in judgment for the rescuing of a few maravides or a five-groats fine, is a worse crime than to be perjured for the saving ten thousand pounds; and to despise authority, when the obedience is so easy as the wearing of a garment or doing of a posture,* is a greater and more impudent con-

* This argument is a "two-edged sword;" for how great then is the contempt of divine authority, when such things are imposed by human authority?—Ed.

tempt, than to despise authority imposing a great burthen of a more considerable pressure, where human infirmity may tempt to a disobedience, and lessen the crime. And let this caution also be inserted, that we do not at all neglect small impositions, if there be direct and signal injunction in the particular instance. For as a great body of light transmitting his rays through a narrow hollowness, does by that small pyramid represent all the parts of its magnitude and glory, so it may happen that a public interest, and the concernments of authority, and the peace of a church, and the integral obedience of the subjects, and the conservation of a community, may be transferred to us by an instance in its own nature inconsiderable; such as wearing of a cognizance, remembering of a word, carrying a branch in time of war, and things of the same nature. And, therefore, when the hand of authority is stretched out and held forth upon a precept, and design the duty upon particular reason, or with actual intuition, there is not the same facility of being dispensed with, as in the neglected and unconsidered instances of other duties.

This only I desire to be observed; that if death or any violent accident, imprisonment, loss of livelihood, or intolerable inconveniences be made, accidentally, consequent to the observing of a law merely human, the law binds not in the particular instance. No man is bound to be a martyr for a ceremony, or to die rather than break a canon, or to suffer confiscation of goods for the pertinacious keeping of a civil constitution. And it is not to be supposed that a lawgiver would have decreed a rite, and bound the lives of the subjects to it, which are of a far greater value than a rite; not only because it were tyrannical and unreasonable, but because the evil of the law were greater than the good of it; it were against the reason of all laws, and destroys the privileges of nature, and it puts a man into a condition as bad as the want of all

laws; for nothing is civilly or naturally worse than death, to which the other evils arrive in their proportion. This is to be understood in particular and positive precepts, introduced for reasons particular; that is, less than those are which combine all societies, and which are the cement of all bodies political; I mean laws ritual in the church, and accidental and emergent in the state. And that which is the best sign to distinguish these laws from others, is also the reason of the assertion. Laws decreed with a penalty to the transgressors, cannot bind to an evil greater than that penalty. If it be appointed that we use a certain form of liturgy under the forfeiture of five pound for every omission, I am bound in conscience to obey it where I can; but I am supposed legally to be disabled, if any tyrant power shall threaten to kill me if I do, or make me pay an hundred pound, or any thing greater than the forfeiture of the law. For all the civil and natural power of the law is by its coercion, and the appendant punishment. The law operates by rewards and punishments, by hope and fear, and it is unimaginable that the law, under a less penalty, can oblige us in any case or accident to suffer a greater. For the compulsion of the tyrant is greater than the coercion of the lawgiver; and the prince thinking the penalty annexed, to be band sufficient, intended no greater evil to the transgressor than the expressed penalty; and therefore much less would he have them that obey the law, by any necessity, be forced to a greater evil; for then, disobedience should escape better than obedience. True it is, every disobeying person that pays the penalty, is not quite discharged from all his obligation; but it is then, when his disobeying is criminal upon some other stock besides the mere breach of the law, as contempt, scandal, or the like; for the law binds the conscience indirectly and by consequence; that is, in plain language, God commands us to obey human laws, and the

penalty will not pay for the contempt, because that is a sin against God ; it pays for the violation of the law, because that was all the direct transgression against man. And then, who shall make him recompence for suffering more than the law requires of him ? Not the prince ; for it is certain, the greatest value he set upon the law was no bigger than the penalty ; and the commonwealth is supposed to be sufficiently secured in her interest by the penalty, or else the law was weak, impotent, and unreasonable. Not God ; for it is not an act of obedience to him, for he binds us no farther to obey human laws, than the lawgiver himself intends or declares ; who cannot reasonably be supposed so over-careful, as to bind hay with cords of silk and gold, or sumptuary laws with the threads of life ; nor a father commanding his child to wait on him every meal, be thought to intend this obligation, even though the house be ready to fall on his head, or when he is to pass a sudden or unforlorn flood before he can get to him. And that it may appear man ought not, it is certain God himself doth not oblige us in all cases and in all circumstances to observe each of his positive precepts. For, assembling together is a duty of God's commanding, which we are not to neglect ; but if death waits at the door of these assemblies, we have the practice of the primitive and best Christians to warrant us to serve God in retirements, and cells, and wildernesses, and leave the assembling together till better opportunities. If I receive more benefit, or the commonwealth, or the church and religion any greater advantage by my particular obedience in these circumstances, (which cannot easily be supposed will be) it is a great act of charity to do it, and then to suffer for it. But if it be no more, that is, if it be not expressly commanded to be done, (though with loss of life or confiscation) it is a good charity to save my own life, or my own estate. And though the other may be better,

yet I am not in all cases obliged to do that which is simply the best. It is a tolerable infirmity, and allowed amongst the very first permissions of nature, that I may preserve my life, unless it be in a very few cases, which are therefore clearly to be expressed, or else the contrary is to be presumed, as being a case most favourable. And it is considerable, that nothing is worse than death but damnation, or something that partakes of that, in some of its worst ingredients ; such as is a lasting torment, or a daily great misery in some other kind. And, therefore, since no human law can bind a man to a worse thing than death, if obedience brings me to death, I cannot be worse when I disobey it, and I am not so bad, if the penalty of death be not expressed. And so for other penalties in their own proportions.

This discourse is also to be understood concerning the laws of peace, not of war ; not only because every disobedience in war may be punished with death, (according as the reason may chance) but also because little things may be of great and dangerous consequence. But in peace it is observable, that there is no human positive superinduced law but by the practice of all the world (which, because the permission of the prince is certainly included in it, is the surest interpretation) it is dispensed withal, by ordinary necessities, by reason of lesser inconveniences and common accidents : thus the not saying of our office daily is excused by the study of divinity, the publishing the bans of matrimony by an ordinary incommodity, the fasting days of the church by a little sickness or a journey ; and therefore much rather if my estate, and most of all if my life be in danger with it : and to say that in these cases there is no interpretative permission to omit the particular action, is to accuse the laws and the lawgiver, the one of unreasonableness, the other of uncharitableness.

22. Fourthly, these considerations are upon

the execution of the duty: but even towards man our obedience must have a mixture of the will and choice, like as our injunction of obedience to the divine command. With good will doing service, (saith the apostle,) for it is impossible to secure the duty of inferiors but by conscience and good will; unless provision could be made against all their secret arts and concealments and escapings, which as no providence can foresee, so no diligence can cure. It is but an eye-service whatsoever is compelled and involuntary: nothing rules a man in private but God and his own desires; and they give laws in a wilderness, and accuse in a cloister, and do execution in a closet, if there be any prevarication.

23. Fifthly, but obedience to human laws goes no farther: we are not bound to obey with a direct and particular act of understanding, as in all divine sanctions; for so long as our superiors are fallible, though it be highly necessary we conform our wills to their innocent laws, yet it is not a duty we should think the laws most prudent or convenient, because all laws are not so; but it may concern the interest of humility and self-denial, to be subject to an inconvenient, so it be not a sinful, command; for so we must choose an affliction when God offers it, and give God thanks for it, and yet we may cry under the smart of it, and call to God for ease and remedy. And yet it were well if inferiors would not be too busy in disputing the prudence of their governors, and the convenience of their constitutions. Whether they be sins or no in the execution, and to our particulars, we are concerned to look to; I say, as to our particulars; for an action may be a sin in the prince commanding it, and yet innocent in the person executing; as in the case of unjust wars, in which the subject, who cannot, ought not to be a judge, yet must be a minister; and it is notorious in the case of executing an unjust sentence, in which not the executioner,

but the judge is the only unjust person; and he that serves his prince in an unjust war is but the executioner of an unjust sentence. But whatever goes farther, does but undervalue the person, slight the government, and unloose the golden cords of discipline. For we are not responsible for degrees, if so we secure the kind and condition of our actions. And since God having derived rays and beams of majesty, and transmitted it in parts upon several states of men, hath fixed human authority and dominion in the golden candlestick of understanding, he that shall question the prudence of his governor, or the wisdom of his sanction, does unclasp the golden rings that tie the purple upon the prince's shoulder; he tempts himself with a reason to disobey, and to extinguish the light of majesty by overturning the candlestick, and hiding the opinion of his wisdom and understanding. And let me say this; he that is confident of his own understanding and reasonable powers, (and who is more than he that thinks himself wiser than the laws?) needs no other devil in the neighbourhood, no tempter but himself to pride and vanity, which are the natural parents of disobedience.

24. But a man's disobedience never seems so reasonable as when the subject is forbidden to do an act of piety, commanded indeed in the general, but uncommanded in certain circumstances. And forward piety and assiduous devotion, a great and indiscreet mortifier, is often tempted to think no authority can restrain the fervours and distempers of zeal in such holy exercises; and yet it is very often as necessary to restrain the indiscretions of a forward person, as to excite the remissness of the cold and frozen. Such persons were the Sarabaites spoken of by Cassian, who were greater labourers and stricter mortifiers than the religious in families and colleges; and yet they endured no superior nor laws. But such customs as these are humiliation without humility, humbling the body and exalting the spirit, or indeed sacrifices and no

obedience. It was an argument of the great wisdom of the fathers of the desert when they heard of the prodigious severities exercised by Simeon Stylites upon himself, they sent one of the religious to him, with power to inquire what was his manner of living, and what warrant he had for such a rigorous undertaking, giving in charge to command him to give it over, and to live in a community with them, and according to the common institution of those religious families. The messenger did so, and immediately Simeon removed his foot from his pillar, with a purpose to descend, but the other according to his commission, called to him to stay, telling him his station and severity was from God. And he that in so great a piety was humble and obedient, did not undertake that strictness out of singularity, nor did it transport him to vanity; for that he had received from the fathers to make judgment of the man, and of his institution; whereas, if upon pretence of the great holiness of that course he had refused the command, the spirit of the person was to be declared captive and imprudent, and the man driven from his troublesome and ostentatious vanity.

25. Our fasts, our prayers, our watchings, our intentions of duty, our frequent communions, and all exterior acts of religion, are to be guided by our pastor, if he sees cause to restrain or assuage any excrescency. For a wound may heal too fast, and then the tumour of the flesh is proud, not healthful; and so may the indiscretions of religion swell to vanity, when we think they grow towards perfection; but when we can endure the caustics and correctives of our spiritual guides, in those things in which we are most apt to please ourselves, then our obedience is regular and humble, and in other things there is less of danger. There is a story told of a very religious person, whose spirit in the ecstasy of devotion was transported to the clarity of a vision, and he seemed to converse

personally with the holy Jesus, feeling from such intercourse great spiritual delights and satisfactions. In the midst of these joys the bell called to prayers, and he, used to the strictness, and well instructed in the necessities of obedience, went to the church, and having finished his devotions, returned, and found the vision in the same posture of glories and entertainment; which also said to him, "Because thou hast left me, thou hast found me; for if thou hadst not left me, I had presently left thee." Whatever the story be, I am sure it is a good parable; for the way to increase spiritual comforts is, to be strict in the offices of humble obedience; and we never lose anything of our joy by laying it aside to attend a duty; and Plutarch reports more honour of Agesilaus' prudence and modesty, than of his gallantry and military fortune; for he was more honourable by obeying the decree of the Spartan senate, recalling him from the midst of his triumphs, than he could have been by finishing the war with prosperous success and disobedience.

26. Our obedience, being guided by these rules, is urged on us by the consignation of divine precepts and the loud voice of thunder: even sealed by a signet of God's right hand, the signature of greatest judgments. For God did with greater severity, punish the rebellion of Korah and his company, than the express murmurs against himself, nay, than the high crime of idolatry. For this crime God visited them with a sword; but for disobedience and mutiny against their superiors, God made the earth to swallow some of them, and fire from heaven to consume the rest; to show that rebellion is to be punished by the conspiracy of heaven and earth, as it is hateful and contradictory both to God and man. And it is not amiss to observe, that obedience to man, being as it is for God's sake, and yet to a person clothed with the circumstances and the same infirmities with ourselves, is a greater instance

of humility, than to obey God immediately, whose authority is divine, whose presence is terrible, whose power is infinite, and not at all depressed by exterior disadvantages or lessening appearances: just as it is both greater faith and greater charity to relieve a poor saint for Jesus' sake, than to give any thing to Christ himself, if he should appear in all the robes of glory and immediate address. For it is to God and to Christ, and wholly for their sakes, and to them that the obedience is done, or the charity expressed; but themselves are persons whose awfulness, majesty and veneration, would rather force than invite obedience or alms. But when God and his holy Son stand behind the cloud, and send their servants to take the homage or the charity, it is the same as if it were done to them; but it receives the advantage of acceptance by the accidental adherences of faith and humility to the several actions respectively. When a king comes to rebels in person, it strikes terror and veneration into them, who are too apt to neglect and despise the person of his ministers, whom they look upon as their fellow-subjects, and consider not in the exaltation of a deputed Majesty. Charles the Fifth found a happy experience of it at Ghent in Flanders, whose rebellion he appeased by his presence, which he could hardly have done by his army. But if the king's authority be as much revered in his deputy as it is sacred in his own person, it is the greater humility and the more confident obedience. And as it is certain, that he is the most humble that submits to his inferiors; so in the same proportion, the lower and meaner the instrument upon which God's authority is born, the higher is the grace that teaches us to stoop so low. I do not say that a sin against human law is greater than a prevarication against a divine commandment; as the instances may be, the distance is next to infinite; and to touch the earth with our foot within the streets of Easter, or to taste flesh upon days

of abstinence, (even in those places and to those persons where they did or do oblige) have no consideration, if they be laid in balance against the crimes of adultery or blasphemy, or oppression; because these crimes cannot stand with the reputation and sacredness of divine authority; but those others may, in most instances, very well consist with the ends of government, which are severally provided for in the diversity of sanctions respectively. But if we make our instances to other purposes, we find, that to mutiny in an army, or to keep private assemblies in a monarchy, are worse than a single thought or morose delectation in a fancy of impurity; because those others destroy government more than these destroy charity of God or obedience. But then, though the instances may vary the conclusion, yet the formal reason is alike, and disobedience to man is a disobedience against God; for God's authority, and not man's, is imprinted upon the superior; and it is like sacred fire in an earthen censer, as holy as if it were kindled with the fanning of a cherub's wing, or placed just under the propitiatory upon a golden altar; and it is but a gross conceit which cannot distinguish religion from its porter; Isis, from the beast that carried it: so that in all disobedience to men, in proportion to the greatness of the matter, or the malice of the person, or his contradiction to the ends of government and combinations of society, we may use the words by which the prophet upbraided Israel, "is it not enough that you are grievous unto men, but will you grieve my God also?" It is a contempt of the divinity, and the affront is transmitted to God himself, when we despise the power which God hath ordained, and all power of every *lawful* superior is such; the spirit of God being witness in the highest measure, "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as idolatry." This is spoken of rebellion against God, and all rebellion is so;

for "he that despiseth you, despiseth me," saith the blessed Jesus; that is menace enough in the instance of spiritual regiment. And 'you who are gathered together against the Lord,' saith Moses to the rebellious princes in the conspiracy of Dathan; that is for the temporal. And to encourage this duty, I shall use no other words than those of Achilles, in Homer, "they that obey in this world, are better than they that command in hell."

A PRAYER FOR THE GRACE OF HOLY OBEDIENCE.

1. O Lord and blessed Saviour Jesus, by whose obedience many became righteous, and reparations were made of the ruins brought to human nature by the disobedience of Adam; thou camest into the world with many great and holy purposes concerning our salvation, and hast given us a great precedent of obedience, which, that thou mightest preserve to thy heavenly Father, thou didst neglect thy life, and becamest obedient even to the death of the cross: O, let me imitate so blessed an example, and by the merits of thy obedience let me obtain the grace of humility and abnegation of all my own desires, in the clearest renunciation of my will; that I may will and refuse in conformity to thy sacred laws and holy purposes; that I may do all thy will cheerfully, choosingly, humbly, confidently, and continually; and thy will may be done upon me with much mercy and fatherly dispensation of thy providence. Amen.

2. Lord, let my understanding adhere to and be satisfied in the excellent wisdom of thy commandments; let my affections dwell in their desires, and all my other faculties be set on daily work for performance of them; and

let my love to obey thee make me dutiful to my superiors, upon whom the impresses of thy authority are set by *thine own hand*; that I may never despise their persons, nor refuse their injunctions, nor chose mine own work, nor murmur at their burthens, nor dispute the prudence of the sanction, nor excuse myself, nor pretend difficulties or impossibilities; but that I may be indifferent in my desires, and resigned to the will of those whom *thou* hast set over me; that since all thy creatures obey thy word, I alone may not disorder the creation, nor cancel those bands and intermedial links of subordination, whereby my duty should pass to thee and thy glory; but that my obedience, being united to thy obedience, I may also have my portion in the glories of thy kingdom. O Lord and blessed Saviour Jesus. Amen.

Considerations upon the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.

1. The holy virgin mother, according to the law of Moses, at the expiration of a certain time came to the temple to be purified: although in her sacred parturition she had contracted no legal impurity; yet she exposed herself to the public opinion and common reputation of an ordinary condition; and still, amongst all generations, she is in all circumstances accounted blessed, and her reputation no tittle altered, save only that it is made the more sacred by this testimony of her humility. But this we are taught, from the consequence of this instance; that if an end principally designed in any duty should be supplied otherwise in any particular person, the duty is nevertheless to be observed; and then the obedience and public order is reason enough for the observation, though the proper end of its designation be wanting in the single person. Thus

is fasting designed for mortification of the flesh and killing all its unruly appetites; and yet married persons who have another remedy, and a virgin whose temple is hallowed by a gift and the strict observances of chastity, may be tied to the duty: and if they might not, then fasting were nothing else but a publication of our impure desires, and an exposing the person to the confidence of a bold temptation, whilst the young men did observe the faster to be tempted from within. But the holy virgin from these acts (of which in signification she had no need, because she sinned not in the conception, nor was impure in the production) expressed other virtues besides obedience; such as were humble thoughts of herself, devotion and reverence to public sanctions, religion and charity, which were like the pure leaves of the whitest lily, fit to represent the beauties of her innocence, but were veiled and shadowed by that sacrament of the Mosaic law.

2. The holy virgin received the greatest favour that any of the daughters of Adam ever did, and knowing from whence and for whose glory she had received it, returns the holy Jesus in a present to God again; for she had nothing so precious as himself to make oblation of: and besides that, "every first-born among the males was holy to the Lord;" this child had an eternal and essential sanctity; and until he came into the world, and was made apt for her to make present of him, there was never in the world any act of adoration proportionable to the honour of the great God; but now there was, and the holy virgin made it, when she presented the holy child Jesus. And now, besides that we are taught to return to God whatsoever we have received from him, if we unite our offerings and devotions to this holy present, we shall, by the merit and excellency of this oblation, exhibit to God an offering, in which he cannot but delight, for the combination's sake and society of his holy Son.

3. The holy mother brought five shekels and a pair of turtle-doves, to redeem the Lamb of God from the Anathema; because every first-born was to be sacrificed to God, or redeemed, if it was it clean; it was the poor man's price, and the holy Jesus was never set at the *greater* prices when he was estimated upon earth. For he that was Lord of the kingdom, chose his portion among the poor of this world, that he might advance the poor to the riches of his inheritance; and so it was from his nativity hither. For at his birth he was poor, at his circumcision poor, and in the likeness of a sinner; at his presentation poor, and like a sinner and a servant; for he chose to be redeemed with an ignoble price. The five shekels were given to the priest for the redemption of the child; and if the parents were not able, he was to be a servant of the temple, and to minister in the inferior offices to the priest; and this was God's seizure and possession of him: for although all the servants of God are his inheritance, yet the ministers of religion, who derive their portion of temporals from his title; who live upon the Corban, and eat the meat of the altar, which is God's peculiar; and come nearer to his holiness by the addresses of an immediate ministration, are God's own, upon another and a distinct challenge. But because Christ was to be the prince of another ministry, and the chief-priest of another order, he was redeemed from attending the Mosaic rites, which he came to abolish, that he might do his Father's business in establishing the Evangelical. Only remember, that the ministers of religion are but God's usufructuaries: as they are not lords of God's portion, and therefore, must dispense it like stewards, not like masters; so the people are not their patrons in paying, nor they their beneficiaries in receiving tithes or other provisions of maintenance: they owe for it to none but God himself; and it should also be considered, that in all sacrilegious detentions of

ecclesiastical rights, God is the person principally injured.

4. The turtle-doves were offered also with the signification of another mystery: in the sacred rites of marriage, although the permissions of natural desires are such as are most ordinate to their ends, the avoiding fornication, the alleviation of economical cares and vexations, and the production of children, and mutual comfort and support; yet the apertures and permissions of marriage have such restraints of modesty and prudence, that all transgression of the just order, to such ends, is a crime; and besides these, there may be degrees of inordination or obliquity of intention, or too sensual complacency, or unhandsome preparations of mind, or unsacramental thoughts; in which particulars, because we have no determined rule but prudence, and the analogy of our rite, and the severity of our religion, which allow in some cases more, in some less, and always uncertain latitudes, for aught we know, there may be lighter transgressions, something that we know not of: and for these, at the purification of the woman, it is supposed the offering was made, and the turtles by being an oblation, did deprecate a supposed irregularity; but by being a chaste and marital emblem, they professed that the obliquity (if any were) was within the protection of the sacred bands of marriage, and therefore so excusable as to be expiated by a cheap offering: and what they did in hieroglyphic, Christians must do in the exposition; be strict observers of the main rites and principal obligations, and not neglectful to deprecate the lesser unhandsomeness of the too sensual desires.

5. God had, at that instant, so ordered that, for great ends of his own and theirs, two very holy persons, of divers sexes and like piety, Simeon and Anna, the one who lived an active and secular, the other a retired and contemplative life, should come into the temple by reve-

lation and direction of the Holy Spirit, and see him whom they and all the world did look for. the Lord's Christ, the Consolation of Israel. They saw him, they rejoiced, they worshipped, they prophesied, they sang hymns; and old Simeon did comprehend and circumscribe in his arms him that filled all the world; and was then so satisfied that he desired to live no longer. God had verified his promise, had shewn him the Messiah, had filled his heart with joy, and made his old age honourable; and now, after all this sight, no object could be pleasant but the joys of paradise. For as a man who hath gazed too freely upon the face and beauties of the sun, is blind and dark to objects of a less splendour, and is forced to shut his eyes, that he may, through the degrees of darkness, perceive the inferior beauties of more proportioned objects,—so was old Simeon, his eyes were so filled with the glories of this revelation, that he was willing to close them in his last night, that he might be brought into the communications of eternity; and he could never more find comfort in any other object this world could minister. For such is the excellency of spiritual things, when they have once filled the corners of our hearts, and made us highly sensible and apprehensible of the interior beauties of God and of religion, that all things of this world are flat and empty, and unsatisfying vanities, as unpleasant as the lees of vinegar to a tongue filled with the spirit of high Italic wines. And until we are so dead to the world, as to apprehend no gust or freer complacency in exterior objects, we never have entertained Christ, or have had our cups overflow with devotion, or are filled with the Spirit. When our chalice is filled with holy oil, with the anointing from above, it will entertain none of the waters of bitterness; or if it does, they are thrust to the bottom, they are the lowest of our desires, and therefore only admitted, because they are natural and constituent.

6. The good old prophetess, Anna, had lived long in chaste widowhood, in the service of the temple, in the continual offices of devotion, in fasting and prayer; and now came the happy instant in which God would give her a great benediction, and an earnest of a greater. The returns of prayer and the blessings of piety are certain; and though not dispensed according to the expectancies of our narrow conceptions, yet shall they so come, at such times and in such measures, as shall crown the piety, and satisfy the desires, and reward the expectation. It was in the temple, (the same place where she had for so many years poured out her heart to God,) that God poured forth his heart to her, sent his Son from his bosom, and there she received his benediction. Indeed in such places God does most particularly exhibit himself, and blessing goes along with him wherever he goes: in holy places God hath put his holy name, and to holy persons God does oftentimes manifest the interior and more secret glories of holiness; provided they come thither, as old Simeon and Anna did, by the motions of the Holy Spirit, not with the designs of vanity, or curiosity, or sensuality; for such spirits as those come to profane and desecrate the house, and unhallow the person, and provoke the deity of the place, and blight us with unwholesome airs.

7. But "Joseph and Mary wondered at these things which were spoken," and treasured them in their hearts, and they became matter of devotion and mental prayer, or meditation.

thy Son, and reward the piety of holy people, who longed for redemption by the coming of the Messiah; give me the perpetual assistance of the same Spirit to be as a monitor and guide to me, leading me to all holy actions, and to the embracements and possessions of thy glorious Son; and remember all thy faithful people, who wait for the consolation and redemption of the church from all her miseries and persecutions, and at last satisfy their desires, by the revelation of thy mercies and salvation. Thou hast advanced thy holy child and set him up for a sign of thy mercies, and a representation of thy glories. Lord, let no act, or thought, or word of mine ever be in contradiction to this blessed sign, but let it be for the ruin of all my vices, and all the powers the devil employs against the church, and for the raising up all those virtues and graces which thou didst design me in the purposes of eternity. But let my portion never be amongst the incredulous, or the scornful, or the heretical, or the profane, or any of those who stumble at this stone which thou hast laid for the foundation of thy church, and the structures of a virtuous life. Remember me with much mercy and compassion when the sword of sorrows or afflictions shall pierce my heart; first transfix me with love, and then all the troubles of this world will be consignations to the joys of a better: which grant, for the mercies and the name sake of thy holy child Jesus. Amen.

DISCOURSE III.

Of Meditation.

O eternal God, who by the inspirations of thy holy Spirit didst direct thy servants Simeon and Anna to the temple at the instant of the presentation of the holy child Jesus, that as thou mightest verify thy promise, and manifest

1. If in the definition of meditation, I should call it an unaccustomed and unpractised duty, I should speak a truth, though somewhat inartificially; for not only the interior beauties and brighter excellences are as unfelt as ideas

and abstractions are, but also the practice and common knowledge of the duty itself are strangers to us, like the retirements of the deep, or the undiscovered treasures of the Indian hills. And this is a very great cause of the dryness and expiration of men's devotion; because our souls are so little refreshed with the waters and holy dews of meditation. We go to our prayers by chance, or order, or by determination of accidental occurrences; and we recite them as we read a book; and sometimes we are sensible of the duty, and a flash of lightning makes the room bright, and our prayers end; and the lightning is gone, and we as dark as ever. We draw our water from standing pools, which never are filled but with sudden showers, and therefore we are dry so often. Whereas, if we would draw waters from the fountains of our Saviour, and derive them through the channel of diligent and prudent meditations, our devotion would be a continual current, and safe against the barrenness of vagrant thoughts.

2. For meditation is an attention and application of our spirit to divine things; a searching out all instruments to a holy life, a devout consideration of them, and a production of those affections which are in a direct order to the love of God and a pious conversation. Indeed, meditation is all that great instrument of piety whereby it is made prudent, and reasonable, and orderly, and perpetual. For supposing our memory instructed with the knowledge of such mysteries and revelations as are apt to entertain the spirit, the understanding is first and best employed in the consideration of them, and then the will in their reception, when they are duly prepared and so transmitted; and both these in such manner and to such purposes, that they become the magazine and great repositories of grace, and instrumental to all designs of virtue.

3. For the understanding is not to consider the matter of any meditation in itself, or as it determines in natural excellences or unworthi-

ness respectively, or with a purpose to furnish itself with notion and riches of knowledge; for that is like the winter sun, it shines, but warms not; but in such order as themselves are put in the designations of theology, in the order of divine laws, in their spiritual capacity, and as they have influence upon holiness: for the understanding here is something else, besides the intellectual power of the soul; it is the spirit; that is, it is celestial in its application, as it is spiritual in its nature; and we may understand it well by considering the beatifical portions of soul and body in their future glories. For therefore even our bodies in the resurrection shall be spiritual, because the operation of them shall be in order to spiritual glories, and their natural actions (such as are seeing and speaking) shall have a spiritual object and supernatural end; and here, as we partake of such excellences and co-operate to such purposes, men are more or less spiritual. And so is the understanding, taken from its first and lowest ends of resting in notion and ineffectual contemplation, and is made spirit; that is, wholly ruled and guided by God's Spirit to supernatural ends and spiritual employments; so that it understands and considers the motions of the heavens, to declare the glory of God; the prodigies and alterations in the firmament, to demonstrate his handy work; it considers the excellent order of creatures, that we may not disturb the order of creation, or dissolve the golden chain of subordination. Aristotle, and Porphyry, and the other Greek philosophers, studied the heavens to search out their natural causes and production of bodies; the wiser Chaldees and Assyrians studied the same things, that they might learn their influences upon us, and make predictions of contingencies; the more moral Egyptian described his theorems in hieroglyphics and phantastic representations, to teach principles of policy, economy, and other prudences of morality and secular negotiation.

But the same philosophy, when it is made Christian, considers, as they did, to greater purposes; even that from the book of the creatures we may glorify the Creator, and hence derive arguments of worship and religion; this is Christian philosophy.

4. I instance only in considerations natural to spiritual purposes; but the same is the manner in all meditation, whether the matter of it be nature or revelation. For if we think of hell, and consider the infinity of its duration, and that its flames last as long as God lasts, and thence conjecture, upon the rules of proportion, why a finite creature may have an infinite, unnatural duration; or think by what ways a material fire can torment an immaterial substance; or why the devils, who are intelligent and wise creatures, should be so foolish as to hate God from whom they know every rivulet of amiability derives. This is to *study*, not to meditate; for meditation considers any thing that may best make us to avoid the place, and to quit a vicious habit, or master and rectify an untoward inclination, or purchase a virtue, or exercise one; so that meditation is an act of the understanding put to the right use.

5. For the holy Jesus, coming to redeem us from the bottomless pit, did it by lifting us up out of the puddles of impurity and the unwholesome waters of vanity; "he redeemed us from our vain conversation;" and our understandings had so many vanities, that they were made instruments of great impiety. The unlearned and ruder nations had fewer virtues, but they had also fewer vices than the wise empires, that ruled the world with violence and wit together. The softer Asians had lust and intemperance in a full chalice; but their understandings were ruder than the finer Latins; for these men's understandings distilled wickedness as through an alembic, and the Romans drank spirits and the sublimed quintessences of villany; whereas

the other made themselves drunk with the lees and cheaper instances of sin: so that the understanding is not an idle and useless faculty, but naturally drives to practice, and brings guests to the inward cabinet of the will, and there they are entertained and feasted. And those understandings which did not serve the baser end of vices, yet were unprofitable for the most part, and furnished their inward rooms with glasses, and beads, and trifles fit for American Indians. From all these impurities and vanities, Jesus hath redeemed all his disciples, and not only thrown out of his temples all the impure rites of Flora and Cybele, but also the trifling and unprofitable ceremonies of the more sober deities; not only vices, but useless and unprofitable speculations, and hath consecrated our head into a temple, our understanding to spirit, our reason to religion, our study to meditation: and this is the first part of the sanctification of our spirit.

6. And this was the cause holy Scripture commands the duty of meditation in proportion still to the excellences of piety and a holy life, to which it is highly and aptly instrumental. "Blessed is the man that meditates in the law of the Lord day and night." And the reason of the proposition and the use of the duty, is expressed to this purpose; "Thy words have I hid in my heart, that I should not sin against thee." The placing and fixing those divine considerations in our understandings, and hiding them there, are designs of high Christian prudence, that they with advantage may come forth in the expresses of a holy life. For what in the world is more apt and natural to produce humility, than to meditate upon the low stoopings and descents of the holy Jesus, to the nature of a man, to the weaknesses of a child, to the poverties of a stable, to the ignobleness of a servant, to the shame of the cross, to the pains of cruelty, to the dust of death, to the title of a sinner, and to the wrath of God? By this instance poverty

is made honourable, and humility is sanctified and made noble, and the contradictions of nature are amiable and fitted for a wise election. Thus hatred of sin, shame of ourselves, confusion at the sense of human misery, the love of God, confidence in his promises, desires of heaven, holy resolutions, resignation of our own appetites, conformity to divine will, oblation of ourselves, repentance and mortification, are the proper emanations from meditating on the sordidness of sin, our proneness to it, our daily miseries as issues of divine vengeance, the glories of God, his infinite, unalterable veracity, the satisfactions in the vision of God, the rewards of piety, the rectitude of the laws of God, and perfection of his sanctions, God's supreme and paternal dominion, and his certain malediction of sinners. And when any one of these considerations is taken to pieces, and so placed in the rooms of application, that a piece of duty is conjoined to a piece of the mystery, and the whole office to the purchase of a grace, or the extermination of a vice, it is like opening our windows to let in the sun and the wind; and holiness is as proportioned an effect to this practice, as glory is to a persevering holiness, by way of reward and moral casuality.

7. For all the affections that are in man are either natural, or by chance, or by the incitement of reason and discourse. Our natural affections are not worthy the entertainments of a Christian; they must be supernatural and divine, that put us into the hopes of perfection and felicity: and these other that are good, unless they come by meditation, they are but accidental, and set with the evening sun; but if they be produced upon the strength of pious meditation, they are as perpetual as they are reasonable, and excellent in proportion to the piety of the principle. A garden that is watered with short and sudden showers, is more uncertain in its fruits and beauties, than if a rivulet waters it with a perpetual distilling and constant humec-

tation. And just such are the short emissions and unpremeditated resolutions of piety, begotten by a dash of holy rain from heaven, whereby God sometimes uses to call the careless just to taste what excellences of piety they neglect; but if they be not produced by the reason of religion, and the philosophy of meditation, they have but the life of a fly or a tall gourd, they come into the world only to say they had a being, you could scarce know their length but by measuring the ground they cover in their fall.

8. For since we are more moved by material and sensible objects, than by things merely speculative and intellectual; and as generals even in spiritual things are less perceived and less motive than particulars; meditation frames the understanding part of religion to the proportions of our nature and our weakness, by making some things more circumstantiate and material, and the more spiritual to be particular, and therefore the more applicable; and the mystery is made like the gospel to the apostles, "Our eyes do see, and our ears do hear, and our hands do handle thus much of the word of life," as is prepared for us in the meditation.

9. First, and therefore every wise person, that intends to furnish himself with affections of religion, or detestation against a vice, or glorifications of a mystery, still will *proportion* the mystery; and fit it with such circumstances of fancy and application, as by observation of himself he knows aptest to make impression. It was a wise design of Marc Antony, when he would stir up the people to revenge the death of Cæsar, he brought his body to the pleading-place; he showed his wounds, held up the rent mantle, and showed them the garment that he put on that night in which he beat the Nervii, that is, in which he won a victory, for which his memory was dear to them; he showed them that wound which pierced his heart; in which they were placed by so dear a love, that he made them his heirs, and left to their public

use places of delight and pleasure: and then it was natural, when he had made those things present to them which had once moved their love and his honour, that grief, at the loss of so honourable and so loved a person, should succeed; and then they were lords of all, their sorrow and revenge seldom slept in two beds. And thus holy meditation produces the passions and desires it intends; it makes the object present and almost sensible, it renews the first passions by a fiction of imagination; it passes from the Paschal parlour to Cedron; it tells the drops of sweat, and measures them, and finds them as big as drops of blood, and then conjectures at the greatness of our sins; it fears in the midst of Christ's agonies; it hears his groans; it spies Judas with his lantern afar off; it follows Jesus to Gabbatha, and wonders at his innocence and their malice; and feels the strokes of the whip, and shrinks the head when the crown of thorns is thrust hard upon his holy brows; and at last goes step by step with Jesus, and carries part of the cross, and is nailed fast with sorrow and compassion, and dies with love. For if the soul be the principle of its own actions, it can produce the same effects by reflex acts of the understanding, when it is assisted by the imaginative part, as when it sees the thing acted: only let the meditation be as minute, particular, and circumstantiate as it may; for a widow, by representing the tenderness of her dead husband's love, produces sorrow and the new affections of a sad endearment. It is too sure, that the recalling the circumstances of a past passion does re-enkindle the flame, and entertain the fancy with the burnings of an impure fire. And this happens not by any advantages of vice, but by the nature of the thing, and the efficacy of circumstances. So does holy meditation produce those impresses and signatures, which are the proper effects of the mystery, if presented in a right line and direct representation.

10. Secondly, He that means to meditate in the best order to the productions of piety, must not be inquisitive for the highest mysteries; but the plainest propositions are to him of the greatest use and evidence. For meditation is the duty of all, and therefore God hath fitted such matter for it as is proportioned to every understanding, and the greatest mysteries of Christianity are plainest, and yet most fruitful of meditation, and most useful to the production of piety. High speculations are as barren as the tops of cedars; but the fundamentals of Christianity are fruitful as the valleys or the creeping vine. For know, that is no meditation, but it may be an illusion, when you consider mysteries to become more learned, without thoughts of improving piety. Let your affections be as high as they can climb towards God, so your considerations be humble, fruitful, and practically mysterious. "Oh that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest," said David. The wings of an eagle would have carried him higher, but yet the innocent dove did furnish him with better emblem to represent his humble design; and lower meditations might sooner bring him to rest in God. It was a saying of *Algirdius*, "That an old and a simple old woman, if she loves Jesus, may be greater than was brother Bonaventure." Want of learning, and disability to consider great secrets of theology, does not at all retard our progress to spiritual perfections. Love to Jesus may be better promoted by the plainer understandings of honest and unlettered people, than by the finer and more exalted speculations of great clerks that have less devotion. For although the way of serving God by the understanding be the best and most lasting, yet it is not necessary that the understanding should be dressed with troublesome and laborious notions. The reason that is in religion is the surest principle to engage our services, and more perpetual than the sweetnesses and the motives of affec-

tion; but every honest man's understanding is best furnished with the discourses and the reasonable parts of religion, when he knows those mysteries of religion upon which Christ and his apostles did build a holy life, and the superstructures of piety; those are the best materials of his meditation.

11. So that, meditation is nothing else but the using of all those arguments, motives and irradiations which God intended to be instrumental to piety. It is a composition of both ways; for it stirs up our affections by reason and the way of understanding, that the wise soul may be satisfied in the reasonableness of the thing, and the affectionate may be entertained with the sweetnesses of holy passion; that our judgment be determined by discourse, and our appetites made active by the caresses of a religious fancy. And therefore the use of meditation is, to consider any of the mysteries of religion with purposes to draw from it rules of life, or affections to virtue, or detestation of vice; and from hence the man rises to devotion, and mental prayer, and intercourse with God; and after that he rests himself in the bosom of beatitude, and is swallowed up with the comprehensions of love and contemplation. These are the several degrees of meditation. But let us first understand that part of it which is duty; and then, if any thing succeed of a middle condition between duty and reward, we will consider also how that duty is to be performed, and how the reward is to be managed, that it may prove to be no illusion: therefore I add also this consideration.

12. Thirdly, Whatsoever pious purposes and deliberations are entertained in the act of meditation, they are carefully to be maintained and thrust forward to actual performances, although they were indefinite and indeterminate, and no otherwise decreed but by resolutions and determinations of reason and judgment. For God assists every pious action

according to its exigence and capacity, and therefore blesses holy meditations with results of reason, and prepossessions dogmatically decreeing the necessity of virtue, and the convenience of certain exercises in order to the purchase of it. He, then, that neglects to actuate such discourses, loses the benefit of his meditation; he is gone no farther than when he first set out, and neglects the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. For if at any time it be certain what spirit it is that speaks within the soul, it is most certain that it is the good spirit that moves us to an act of virtue in order to acquisition of the habit: and when God's grace hath assisted us so far in our meditation, that we understand our duty, and are moved with present arguments, if we put not forth our hand and make use of them, we do nothing towards our duty; and it is not certain that God will create graces in us as he does the soul. Let every pious person think every conclusion of reason in his meditation, to have passed an obligation upon him: and if he hath decreed that fasting so often, and doing so many religious acts, is convenient and conducing to the production of a grace he is in pursuit of: let him know, that every such decree and reasonable proposition is the grace of God, instrumental to piety, part of his assistance, and therefore in no case to be extinguished.

13. Fourthly, In meditation let the understanding be restrained, and under such prudent coercion and confinement that it wander not from one discourse to another, till it hath perceived some fruit from the first; either that his soul be instructed in a duty, or moved by a new argument, or confirmed in an old, or determined to some exercise and intermedial action of religion, or hath broke out into some prayers and intercourse with God, in order to the production of a virtue. And this is the mystical design of the spouse in the Canticles

of Solomon: "I adjure you, O you daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that you stir not up nor awake my love till he please." For it is lightness of spirit to pass over a field of flowers and to fix nowhere, but to leave it without carrying some honey with us; unless the subject be of itself barren and unfruitful; and then why was it chosen? or that it is made so by our indisposition, and then indeed it is to be quitted. But (it is St. Chrysostom's simile) as a lamb sucking the breast of its mother moves the head from one part to another, till it hath found a distilling fontinel, and then it fixes till it be satisfied, or the fountain cease dropping: so should we in meditation reject such materials as are barren like the tops of hills, and fix upon such thoughts which nourish and refresh, and there dwell till the nourishment be drawn forth, or so much of it as we can then temperately digest.

14. Fifthly, In meditation strive rather for graces than for gifts, for affections in the way of virtue more than the overflowings of sensible devotion; and therefore if thou findest any thing by which thou mayest be better, though thy spirit do not actually rejoice or find any gust or relish in the manducation, yet chose it greedily. For although the chief end of meditation be affection, and not determinations intellectual; yet there is choice to be had of the affections, and care must be taken that the affections be desires of virtue, or repudiations and aversions from something criminal; not joys and transportations spiritual, comforts and complacencies; for they are no part of our duty: sometimes they are encouragements, and sometimes rewards; sometimes they depend upon habitude and disposition of body, and seem great matters when they have little in them, and are more bodily than spiritual, like the gift of tears, and yearning of the bowels; and sometimes they are illusions and tempta-

tions, at which if the soul stoops and be greedy after, they may prove like Hippomenes' golden apples to Atalanta, retard our course, and possibly do some hazard to the whole race. And this will be nearer reduced to practice, if we consider the variety of matter which is fitted to the meditation in several states of men travelling towards heaven.

15. For the first beginners in religion are employed in the mastering of their first appetites, casting out their devils, exterminating all evil customs, lessening the proclivity of habits, and countermanding the too great forwardness of vicious inclinations: and this, which divines call the purgative way, is wholly spent in actions of repentance, mortification, and self-denial. and therefore if a penitent person snatches at comforts, or the tastes of sensible devotion, his repentance is too delicate; it is but a rod of roses and jessamine. If God sees the spirit broken all in pieces, and that it needs a little of the oil of gladness for its support and restitution to the capacities of its duty, he will give it; but this is not to be designed, nor snatched at in the meditation: tears of joy are not good expressions nor instruments of repentance; we "must not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles;" no refreshment is to be looked for here, but such only as are necessary for support; and when God sees they are, let not us trouble ourselves, he will provide them. But the meditations which are exempt to this purgative way and practice of first beginners, are not apt to produce delicacies, but in the sequel and consequent of it. "Afterwards it brings forth the pleasant fruit of righteousness, but for the present it hath no joy in it;" no joy of sense, though much satisfaction to reason. And such are meditations of the fall of angels and man; the ejection of them from heaven, of our parents from paradise; the horror and obliquity of sin, the wrath of God, the severity of his anger, mortification of our body and

spirit, self-denial, the cross of Christ, death, and hell, and judgment; the terrors of an evil conscience, the insecurities of a sinner, the unreasonableness of sin, the troubles of repentance, the wear and sting of a burdened spirit, the distressing removal of evil habits, and the utter abolition of them: if these nettles bear honey, we may fill ourselves; but such sweetnesses spoil the operations of these bitter poisons. Here, therefore, let your addresses to God and your mental prayers be affectionate desires of pardon, humble considerations of ourselves, thoughts of revenge against our crimes, designs of mortification, indefatigable solicitations to virtue, expresses of shame and confusion of face; for he meditates best in the purgative way, that makes these affections most operative and high.

16. After our first step is taken, and the punitive part of repentance is resolved on, and begun, and put forward into good degrees of progress, we then enter into the *illuminative* way of religion, and set upon the acquisition of virtues, and of spiritual graces; and therefore our meditations are to be proportioned to the design of that employment: such as are considerations of the life of Jesus, examples of saints, practices of virtue, means of acquiring them, descriptions of proper exercises to every pious habit, the eight beatitudes, the gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost, the promises of the gospel, the attributes of God as they are revealed to represent God to be imitate, and to make us religious; the rewards of heaven, excellent and select sentences of holy persons, to be as incentives of piety: these are the proper matter for proficients in religion. But then the affections producible from these are love of virtue, desires to imitate the Holy Jesus, affections to saints and holy persons, conformity of choice, subordination to God's will, election of the ways of virtue, satisfaction of the understanding in the ways of religion,

and resolutions to pursue them in the midst of all discomfort and persecutions; and our mental prayer or intercourse with God, which are the present emanations of our meditations, must be in order to these affections, and productions from those: and in all these yet there is safety and piety, and no seeking of ourselves, but designs of virtue in just reason and duty to God, and for his sake, that is, for his commandment. And in all these particulars, if there be such a sterility of spirit that there be no end served but of spiritual profit, we are never the worse; all that God requires of us is, that we shall live well, and "repent in just measure and right manner," and he that doth so, hath meditated well.

17. From hence if a pious soul passes to affections of greater sublimity, and intimate and more immediate, abstracted, and immaterial love, it is well; only remember that the love God requires of us in an operative, material, and communicative love; "if ye love me, keep my commandments:" so that, still, a good life is the effect of the sublimest meditation; and if we make our duty sure behind us, ascend up as high into the mountain as you can, so your ascent may consist with the securities of your person, the condition of infirmity, and the interests of your duty. According to the saying of Ildefonsus, "Our empty saying of lauds, and reciting verses in honour of his name, please not God so well as the imitation of him does advantage to us; and a devout imitator pleases the spouse better than an idle panegyric:" Let your work be like his, your duty in imitation of his precept and example, and then sing praises as you list; no heart is large enough, no voice pleasant enough, no life long enough, nothing but an eternity of duration and a beatifical state can do it well; and therefore holy David joins them both, "Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation

aright I will shew the salvation of God." All thanks and praise, without a right-ordered conversation are but the echo of religion, a voice and no substance; but if those praises be sung by a heart righteous and obedient, that is, "singing with the spirit and singing with understanding," that is the music God delights in.

18. Sixthly, but let me observe and press this caution: it is a mistake, and not a little dangerous, when people, religious and *forward*, shall too promptly, frequently and nearly spend their thoughts in consideration of divine excellences. God hath shewn thee merit enough to spend all thy stock of love upon, in the characters of his power, the book of the creature, the great tables of his mercy, and the lines of his justice; we have cause enough to praise his excellences in what we feel of him, and are refreshed with his influence, and see his beauties with reflexion, though we do not put our eyes out with gazing upon his face. To behold the glories and perfections of God with a more direct intuition is the privilege of angels, who yet cover their faces in the brightness of his presence: it is only permitted to us to consider the "back parts" of God. And therefore those speculations are too bold and imprudent addresses, and minister to danger more than to Religion, when we pass away from the direct studies of virtue, and those thoughts of God which are the freer and safer communications of the deity, which are the means of intercourse and relation between him and us; to those considerations concerning God which are metaphysical and remote, the formal objects of adoration and wonder, rather than of virtue and temperate discourses: for God in Scripture never revealed any of his abstracted perfections and remoter and mysterious distances, but with a purpose to produce fear in us, and therefore to chide the temerity and boldness of too familiar and nearer intercourse.

19. True it is that every thing we see or can

consider represents some perfections of God; but this I mean, that no man should consider too much and meditate too frequently upon the immediate perfections of God, as it were by way of *intuition*, but as they are manifested in the creatures and in the ministeries of virtue; and also whenever God's perfections be the matter of meditation, we should not ascend upwards into him, but descend upon ourselves, like fruitful vapours drawn up into a cloud, descending speedily into a shower; that the effect of the consideration be a design of good life; and that our love to God be not spent in abstractions, but in good works and humble obedience. The other kind of love may deceive us; and therefore so may such kind of considerations which are its instrument. But this I am now more particularly to consider.

20. For beyond this I have described, there is a degree of meditation so exalted, that it changes the very name, and is called contemplation, and it is in the *unitive* way of religion, that is, it consists in unions and adherences to God; it is a prayer of quietness and silence, and a meditation extraordinary, a discourse without variety, a vision and intuition of divine excellences, an immediate entry into an orb of light, and a resolution of all our faculties into sweetnesses, affections, and gazings upon the divine beauty; and is carried on to ecstasies, raptures, suspensions, elevations, abstractions, and apprehensions beatifical. In all the course of virtuous meditation, the soul is like a virgin invited to make a matrimonial contract, it inquires the condition of the person, his estate and disposition, and other circumstances of amiability and desire. But when she is satisfied with these inquiries, and hath chosen her husband, she no more considers particulars, but is moved by his voice and his gesture, and runs to his entertainment and fruition, and spends herself wholly in affections, not to obtain, but enjoy his love.

21. But this is a thing not to be discoursed of, but felt. And although in other sciences the terms must first be known, and then the rules and conclusions scientific, here it is otherwise; for first the whole experience of this must be obtained, before we can so much as know what it is: and the end must be acquired first, the conclusion before the premises. They that pretend to these heights call them the secrets of the kingdom; but they are such which no man can describe, such which God hath not revealed in the publication of the gospel, such for the acquiring of which there are no means prescribed, and to which no man is obliged, and which are not in any man's power to obtain, nor such which it is lawful to pray for or desire, nor concerning which we shall ever be called to an account.

22. Indeed when persons have been long softened with the continual droppings of religion, and their spirits made timorous and apt for impression by the assiduity of prayer, and perpetual alarms of death, and the continual dyings of mortification; the fancy, which is a very great instrument of devotion, is kept continually warm and in a disposition and aptitude to take fire, and to flame out in great ascents; and when they suffer transportations beyond the burthens and support of reason, they suffer they know not what, and call it what they please, and other pious people that hear talk of it admire that devotion which is so eminent and beatified, (for so they esteem it) and so they come to be called raptures and ecstasies, which even among the apostles were so seldom, that they were never spoke of; for those visions, raptures, and intuitions of St. Stephen, St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John, were not pretended to be of this kind; not excesses of religion, but prophetic and intuitive revelations to great and significant purposes, such as may be and are described in story; but these other cannot; for so Cassian reports and com-

mends a saying of Antony the Eremite, "That is not a perfect prayer in which the votary does either understand himself or the prayer;" meaning, that persons eminently religious were divina patientes, as Dionysius Areopagita said of his master Hierotheus, Patics in devotion, suffering ravishments of senses, transported beyond the uses of humanity, into the suburbs of beatifical apprehensions. But whether or no this be any thing besides a too intense and indiscreet pressure of the faculties of the soul to inconveniences of understanding, or else a credulous, busy, and untamed fancy, they that think best of it cannot give a certainty. There are, and have been some religious who have acted madness, and pretended inspirations; and when these are destitute of a prophetic spirit, if they resolve to serve themselves upon the pretences of it, they are disposed to the imitation, if not to the sufferings of madness; and it would be a great folly to call such "full of God," who are no better than fantastic and mad people.

23. This we are sure of, that many illusions have come in the likeness of visions, and absurd fancies under the pretence of raptures, and what some have called the spirit of prophecy hath been the spirit of lying, and contemplation hath been nothing but melancholy and unnatural lengths, and stillness of prayer hath been a mere dream and hypochondriacal devotion, and hath ended in pride or despair, or some sottish and dangerous temptation. It is reported of Heron the monk, that having lived a retired, mortified, and religious life for many years together, at last he came to that habit of austerity or singularity, that he refused the festival refection, and freer meals of Easter, and other solemnities, that he might do more eminently than the rest, and spend his time in greater abstractions and contemplations: but the devil, taking advantage of the weakness of his melancholic and unsettled spirit, gave him a

transportation and an ecstasy, in which he fancied himself to have attained so great perfection, that he was as dear to God as a crowned martyr, and angels would be his security for indemnity, though he threw himself to the bottom of a well. He obeyed his fancy and temptation, did so, bruised himself to death, and died possessed with a persuasion of the verity of that ecstasy and transportation.

24. I will not say that all violences and extravagances of a religious fancy are illusions, but I say that they are all unnatural, not hallowed by the warrant of a revelation, nothing reasonable, nothing secure. I am not sure that they ever consist with humility, but it is confessed that they are often produced by self-love, arrogancy, and the great opinion others have of us. I will not judge the condition of those persons who are said to have suffered these extraordinaries, for I know not the circumstances, or causes, or attendants, or the effects, or whether the stories be true that make report of them; but I shall only advise that we follow the intimation of our blessed Saviour, that we sit down in the lowest place, till the master of the feast comes and bids us sit up higher. If we entertain the inward man in the purgative and illuminative way, that is, in actions of repentance, virtue, and precise duty; that is the surest way of uniting us to God, whilst it is done by faith and obedience; and that also is love, and in these peace and safety dwell. And after we have done our work, it is not discretion in a servant to hasten to his meal, and snatch at the refreshment of visions, unions, and abstractions; but first we must gird ourselves, and wait upon the master, and not sit down ourselves till we all be called at the great supper of the Lamb.

25. It was therefore an excellent desire of St. Bernard, who was as likely as any to have such altitudes of speculation, if God had really dispensed them to persons holy, imaginative,

and religious; "I pray God grant to me peace of spirit, joy in the Holy Ghost, to compassionate others in the midst of my mirth, to be charitable in simplicity, to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to mourn with them that mourn; and with these I shall be content: other exaltations of devotion I leave to apostles and apostolic men; the high hills are for the harts and the climbing goats, the stony rocks and the recesses of the earth for the conies." It is more healthful and nutritive to dig the earth, and to eat of her fruits, than to stare upon the greatest glories of the heavens, and live upon the beams of the sun. So unsatisfying a thing is rapture and transportation to the soul, that it often distracts the faculties, but seldom does advantage piety, and is full of danger in the greatest of its lustre. If ever a man be more in love with God by such instruments, or more endeared to virtue, or made more severe and watchful in his repentance, it is an excellent grace and gift of God: but then this is nothing but the joys and comfort of ordinary meditation: those extraordinary, as they have no sense in them, so are not pretended to be instruments of virtue, but are like Jonathan's arrows shot beyond it, to signify the danger the man is in towards whom such arrows are shot; but if the person be made unquiet, unconstant, proud, pusillanimous, of high opinion, pertinacious and confident in uncertain judgments, or desperate, it is certain they are temptations and illusions; so that, as all our duty consists in the ways of repentance and acquisitions of virtue, so there rests all our safety, and by consequence all our solid joys; and this is the effect of ordinary, pious, and regular meditations.

26. If I mistake not, there is a temptation like this under another name amongst persons whose religion hath less discourse and more fancy, and that is, a familiarity with God, which indeed, if it were rightly understood, is an affection consequent to the illuminative way;

that is, an act or an effect of the virtue of religion and devotion, which consists in prayers and addresses to God, lauds and eucharists and hymns, and confidence of coming to the throne of grace upon assurance of God's veracity and goodness infinite: so that familiarity with God, which is an affection of friendship, is the intercourse of giving and receiving blessings and graces respectively; and it is produced by a holy life, or the being in the state of grace, and is part of every man's inheritance that is a friend of God. But when familiarity with God shall be esteemed a privilege of singular and eminent persons not communicated to all the faithful, and is thought to be an admission to a nearer intercourse of secrecy with God, it is an effect of pride, and a mistake in judgment concerning the very same thing which the old divines call the unitive way, if themselves that claim it understood the terms of art, and the consequents of their own intentions.

27. Only I shall observe one circumstance, that familiarity with God is nothing else but an admission to be of God's family, the admission of a servant or a son in minority, and implies obedience, duty, and fear on our parts; care, and providence, and love on God's part. And it is not the familiarity of sons, but the impudence of proud equals, to express this pretended privilege in unmannerly and irreverent addresses and discourses: and it is a sure rule, that whatsoever heights of piety, union, or familiarity, any man pretends to, it is of the devil, unless the greater the pretence be, the greater also be the *humility* of the man. The highest flames are the most tremulous; and so are the most holy and eminent religious persons more full of awfulness, and fear, and modesty, and humility; so that in true divinity and right speaking, there is no such thing as the unitive way of religion, save only in the effects of duty, obedience, and the expresses of the precise virtue of religion. Meditations

in order to a good life, let them be as exalted as the capacity of the person and subject will endure, up to the height of contemplation; but if contemplation comes to be a distinct thing, and something besides or beyond a distinct degree of virtuous meditation, it is lost to all sense and religion and prudence. Let no man be hasty to eat of the fruits of paradise before his time.

28. And now I shall not need to enumerate the blessed fruits of holy meditation; for it is a grace that is instrumental to all effects, to the production of all virtues, and the extinction of all vices, and, by consequence, the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost within us is the natural or proper emanation from the frequent exercise of this duty; only it hath something particularly excellent, besides its general influence: for meditation is that part of prayer which knits the soul to its right object, and confirms and makes actual our intention and devotion. Meditation is the tongue of the soul and the language of our spirit; and our wandering thoughts in prayer are but the neglects of meditation, and recessions from that duty; and according as we neglect meditation, so are our prayers imperfect, meditation being the soul of prayer, and the intention of our spirit. But in all other things meditation is the instrument and conveyance; it habituates our affections to heaven, it hath permanent content, it produces constancy of purpose, despising of things below; inflaming desires of virtue, love of God, self-denial, humility of understanding, and universal correction of our life and manners.

THE PRAYER.

Holy and eternal Jesus, whose whole life and doctrine was a perpetual sermon of holy life, a treasure of wisdom, and a repository of divine

materials for meditation; give me grace to understand, diligence and attention to consider, care to lay up, and carefulness to reduce to practice all those actions, discourses, and pious lessons, and intimations by which thou didst expressly teach, or tacitly imply, or mysteriously signify our duty. Let my understanding become as spiritual in its employment and purposes as it is immaterial in its nature: fill my memory as a vessel of election with remembrances and notions highly compunctive, and greatly incentive of all the parts of sanctity. Let thy holy spirit dwell in my soul, instructing my knowledge, sanctifying my thoughts, guiding my affections, directing my will in the choice of virtue; that it may be the great employment of my life to meditate in thy law, to study thy preceptive will, to understand even the niceties and circumstantials of my duty, that ignorance may neither occasion a sin, nor become a

punishment. Take from me all vanity of spirit, lightness of fancy, curiosity and impertinency of inquiry, illusions of the devil and fantastic deceptions: let my thoughts be as my religion, plain, honest, pious, simple, prudent, and charitable; of great employment and force to the production of virtues and extermination of vice, but suffering no transportations of sense and vanity, nothing greater than the capacities of my soul, nothing that may minister to any intemperances of spirit; but let me be wholly inebriated with love, and that love wholly spent in doing such actions as best please thee in the conditions of my infirmity and the securities of humility, till thou shalt please to draw the curtain and reveal thy interior beauties in the kingdom of thine eternal glories: which grant for thy mercy's sake, O holy and eternal Jesus. Amen.

SECTION VI.

OF THE DEATH OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, OR THE BABES OF BETHLEHEM, AND THE FLIGHT OF JESUS INTO EGYPT.

1. ALL this while Herod waited for the return of the wise men, that they might give directions where the child did lie, and his sword might find him out with a certain and direct execution. But "when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, he was exceeding wroth." For it now began to deserve his trouble, when his purposes, which were most secret, began to be contradicted and diverted with a prevention, as if they were resisted by an all-seeing and almighty providence. He began to suspect the hand of heaven was in it, and saw there was nothing of his purposes to be acted, unless he could dissolve the golden chain of predestination. Herod believed the divine oracles, foretelling that a king should be born in Bethlehem; and yet his ambition had made him so stupid, that he attempted to cancel the decree of heaven. For if he did not believe the prophecies, why was he troubled? If he did believe them, how could he possibly hinder that event which God had foretold would He certainly bring to pass?

2. And therefore since God already had hindered him from the executions of a distinguishing sword, he resolved to send a sword of indiscrimination and confusion, hoping that if he killed all the babes of Bethlehem, the young king's reign also should soon terminate. "He therefore sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men." For this execution was in

the beginning of the second year after Christ's nativity, as in all probability we guess; not at the two years end, as some suppose: because as his malice was subtle, so he intended it should be secure; and though he had been diligent in his inquiry, and was near the time in his computation, yet he that was never sparing of the lives of others, would now, to secure his kingdom, rather overact his severity for some months, than by doing execution, but just to the tittle of his account, hazard the escaping of his Messiah.

3. This execution was sad, cruel and universal: no abatements made for the dire shriekings of the mothers, no tender-hearted soldier was employed, no hard-hearted person was softened by the weeping eyes and pity-begging looks of those mothers, that wondered how it was possible any person should hurt their pretty sucklings; no connivances there, no protections, or friendships, or consideration, or indulgences; but Herod caused that his own child which was at nurse in the coasts of Bethlehem should bleed to death: which made Augustus Cæsar to say, that "in Herod's house it were better to be a hog than a child:" because the custom of the nation did secure a hog from Herod's knife, but no religion could secure his child. The sword being thus made sharp by Herod's commission, killed fourteen thousand*

* This number is traditional, but improbable. Not more so, however, than modern calculations. Michaelis reduces the number to twenty, and others to fifty. This is done, in order to proportion the children to the population of Bethlehem. But the massacre extended also "to all the coasts thereof." E.

pretty babes, as the Greeks in their calendar, and the Abyssinians of Ethiopia do commemorate in their offices of liturgy. For Herod, crafty and malicious, that is, perfectly tyrant, had caused all the children to be gathered together; which the credulous mothers (supposing it had been to take account of their age and number in order to some taxing) hindered not, but unwittingly suffered themselves and their babes to be betrayed to an irremediable butchery.

4. "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, lamentation and weeping and great mourning, Rachael weeping for her children and would not be comforted." All the synonyms of sadness were little enough to express this great weeping, when fourteen thousand mothers in one day saw their pretty babes pouring forth their blood into that bosom whence not long before they had sucked milk, and instead of those pretty smiles which used to entertain the fancy and dear affections of their mothers, nothing but affrighting shrieks, and then ghastly looks. The mourning was great, like "the mourning in the valley of Hinnom, and there was no comforter;" their sorrow was too big to be cured till it should lie down alone, and rest with its own weariness.

5. But the malice of Herod went also into the hill-country, and hearing that of John the son of Zachary great things were spoken, by which he was designed to a great ministry about this young prince, he attempted in him also to rescind the prophecies, and sent a messenger of death towards him; but the mother's care had been early with him, and sent him into desert places, where he continued "till the time" appointed "of his manifestation unto Israel." But as the children of Bethlehem died in the place of Christ, so did the Father of the Baptist die for his child. For Herod "slew Zachary between the temple and the

altar," because he refused to betray his son to the fury of that rabid bear. Though some persons very eminent amongst the stars of the primitive church report a tradition, that a place being separated in the temple for virgins, Zachary suffered the mother of our Lord to abide there after the birth of her Holy Son, affirming her still to be a virgin; and that for this reason, not Herod, but the Scribes and Pharisees did kill Zachary.

6. Tertullian reports, that the blood of Zachary had so besmeared the stones of the pavement, which was the altar on which the good old priest was sacrificed, that no art or industry could wash the tincture out, the dye and guilt being both indelible; as if, because God did intend to exact of that nation "all the blood of righteous persons from Abel to Zacharias," who was the last of the martyrs of the synagogue, he would leave a character of their guilt in their eyes, to upbraid their irreligion, cruelty, and infidelity. Some there are who affirm these words of our blessed Saviour not to relate to any Zachary who had been already slain; but to be a prophecy of the last of all the martyrs of the Jews, who should be slain immediately before the destruction of the last temple and the dissolution of the nation. Certain it is, that such a Zachary, the son of Baruch, (if we may believe Josephus) was slain in the middle of the temple a little before it was destroyed; and it is agreeable to the nature of the prophecy and reproof here made by our blessed Saviour, that "from Abel to Zachary" should take in "all the righteous blood" from first to last, till the iniquity was complete; and it is not imaginable that the blood of our blessed Lord and of St. James, their bishop, (for whose death many of themselves thought God destroyed their city) should be left out of the account, which yet would certainly be left out, if any other Zachary should be meant than he whom they last slew: and in proportion to

this, Cyprian de Valera expounds that which we read in the *past* tense, to signify the future, ye slew, i. e. shall slay; according to the style often used by prophets, and as the aorist of an uncertain signification will bear. But the first great instance of the divine vengeance for these executions was upon Herod, who in very few years after was smitten of God with so many plagues and tortures, that himself alone seemed like an hospital of the incurables: for he was tormented with a soft slow fire, like that of burning iron or the cinders of yew, in his body; in his bowels with intolerable colics and ulcers, in his feet with gout, in his nerves with convulsions, difficulty of breathing; and out of divers parts of his body issued out so impure and ulcerous a steam, that the loathsomeness, pain, and indignation, made him once to snatch a knife with purpose to have killed himself, but that he was prevented by a nephew of his that stood there in attendance.

7. But as the flesh of beasts grows callous by stripes and the pressures of the yoke, so did the heart of Herod by the loads of divine vengeance. God began his hell here, and the pains of hell never made any man less impious: for Herod perceiving that he must now die, first put to death his son Antipater, under pretence that he would have poisoned him; and, that the last scene of his life might, for pure malice and exalted spite, outdo all the rest, because he believed the Jewish nation would rejoice at his death, he assembled all the nobles of the people, and put them in prison, giving in charge to his sister Salome, that, when he was expiring his last, all the nobility should be slain, that his death might be lamented with a perfect and universal sorrow.

8. But God that brings to nought the counsels of wicked princes, turned the design against the intendment of Herod; for when he was dead, and could not call his sister to account for disobeying his most bloody and unrighteous

commands, she released all the imprisoned and despairing gentlemen, and made the day of her brother's death a perfect jubilee, a day of joy, such as was that when the nation was delivered from the violence of Haman in the days of Purim.

9. And all this while God had provided a sanctuary for the holy child Jesus. For God seeing the secret purposes of blood which Herod had, sent his angel "who appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and fly into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. Then he arose, and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt." And they made their first abode in Hermopolis in the country of Thebais, whither when they first arrived, the child Jesus being by design or providence carried into a temple, all the statues of the idol gods fell down, like Dagon at the presence of the ark, and suffered their timely and just dissolution and dishonour, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, "behold the Lord shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence." And in the life of the prophet Jeremy, written by Epiphanius,* it is reported, "that he told the Egyptian priests, that then their idols should be broken in pieces, when a holy virgin with her child should enter into their country: which prophecy possibly might be the cause that the Egyptians did, besides their vanities, worship also an infant in a manger, and a virgin in her bed.

10. From Hermopolis to Maturea went these holy pilgrims in pursuance of their safety and provisions, where it was reported they dwelt in a garden of balsam, till Joseph being at the

* There is, in Arabic, an Apocryphal gospel of the infancy. Dr. Clarke says, I have read this through, and have found it a piece of gross superstition, having nothing to entitle it to a shadow of credibility. Ed.

end of seven years (as it is commonly believed) ascertained by an angel of the death of Herod, and commanded to return to the land of Israel, was obedient to the heavenly vision, and returned. But hearing that Archelaus did reign in the place of his father, and knowing that the cruelty and ambition of Herod was hereditary or entailed upon Archelaus, being also warned to turn aside into the parts of Galilee, which was of a distinct jurisdiction, governed indeed by one of Herod's sons, but not by Archelaus, thither he diverted, and there that holy family remained in the city of Nazareth, whence the holy child had the appellation of a Nazarene.

Considerations upon the Death of the Innocents, and the Flight of the Holy Jesus into Egypt.

1. Herod having called the wise men, and received information of their design, and the circumstances of the child, pretended religion too, and desired them to bring him word when they had found the babe, "that he might come and worship him;" meaning to make a sacrifice of him, to whom he should pay his adoration; and instead of investing the young prince with a royal purple, he would have stained his swaddling bands with his blood. It is ever dangerous when a wicked prince pretends religion; his design is then foulest by how much it needs to put on a fairer outside: but it was an early policy in the world, and it concerned men's interests to seem religious, when they thought that to be so was an abatement of great designs. When Jezabel designed the robbing and destroying Naboth, she sent to the elders to proclaim a fast; for the external and visible remonstrances of religion leave in the spirits of men a great reputation of the seeming person,

and therefore they will not rush into a furious sentence against his actions, at least not judge them with prejudice against the man towards whom they are so fairly prepared, but do some violence to their own understanding, and either disbelieve their own reason, or excuse the fact, or think it but an error, or a less crime. or the incidences of humanity; or however, are so long in decreeing against him, whom they think to be religious, that the rumour is abated, or the stream of indignation is diverted by other laborious arts intervening before our zeal is kindled; and so the person is unjudged, or at least the design secured.

2. But in this, human policy was exceedingly infatuated; and though Herod had trusted his design to no keeper but himself, and had pretended fair, having religion for the word, and called the wise men privately, and intrusted them with no employment but a civil request, an account of the success of their journey, which they had no reason or desire to conceal; yet his heart was open to the eye of heaven, and the sun was not more visible than his dark purpose was to God, and it succeeded accordingly. The child was sent away. the wise men warned not to return, Herod was mocked and enraged; and so his craft became foolish and vain; and so are all counsels intended against God, or any thing of which he himself hath undertaken the protection. For although we understand not the reasons of security, because we see not that admirable centering of infinite things in the divine providence, whereby God brings his purposes to act by ways unlooked for, and sometimes contradictory; yet the public and perpetual experience of the world hath given continual demonstrations, that all evil counsels hath come to nought; that the succeeding of an impious design is no argument that the man is prosperous; that the curse is then surest, when his fortune spreads the largest; that the contradiction and impossibilities of deliverance

to pious persons, are but an opportunity and engagement for God to do wonders, and to glorify his power, and to exalt his mercy, by the instances of miraculous or extraordinary events. And as the afflictions happening to good men are alleviated by the support of God's good Spirit, and enduring them here, are but consignations to an honourable amends hereafter ; so the succeeding prosperities of fortunate impiety, when they meet with punishment in the next or in the third age, or in the deletion of a people five ages after, are the greatest arguments of God's providence, who keeps wrath in store, and forgets not to do judgment for all them that are oppressed with wrong. It was laid up with God, and was perpetually in his eye, being the matter of a lasting, durable, and unremitted anger.

3. But God had care of the holy child ; he sent his angel to warn Joseph, with the babe and his mother, to fly into Egypt. Joseph and Mary instantly arise, and without inquiry how they shall live there, or when they shall return, or how be secured, or what accommodations they shall have in their journey, at the same hour of the night begin the pilgrimage with the cheerfulness of obedience, and the securities of faith, and the confidence of hope, and the joys of love ; knowing themselves to be recompensed for all the trouble they could endure, in that they were instruments of the safety of the holy Jesus, that they then were serving God, that they were encircled with the securities of the divine providence, and in these dispositions all places were alike ; for every region was a paradise whilst they were in company with Jesus. And indeed that man wants many degrees of faith and prudence, who is solicitous for the support of his necessities when he is doing the commandment of God. If he commands thee to offer a sacrifice, himself will provide a lamb, or enable thee to find one ; and he would remove thee into a state of separation, where

thy body needs no supplies of provision, if he meant thou shouldest serve him without provisions. He will certainly take away thy need, or satisfy it ; he will feed thee himself, as he did the Israelites, or take away thy hunger, as he did to Moses ; or send ravens to feed thee, as he did to Elias ; or make charitable people minister to thee, as the widow to Elisha, or give thee his own portion, as he maintained the Levites ; or make thine enemies to pity thee, as the Assyrians did the captive Jews. For whatsoever the world hath, and whatsoever can be conveyed by wonder or by providence, all that, is thy security for provisions, so long as thou doest the work of God. And remember, that the assurance of blessing, and health, and salvation, is not made by doing what we list, or being where we desire, but by doing God's will, and being in the place of his appointment : we may be safe in Egypt, if we be there in obedience to God ; and we may perish among the babes of Bethlehem, if we be there by our own election.

4. Joseph and Mary did not argue against the angel's message, because they had a confidence of their charge, who with the breath of his mouth could have destroyed Herod, though he had been abetted with all the legions marching under the Roman eagles ; but they, like the two cherubim about the propitiatory, took the child between them, and fled, giving way to the fury of persecution, which possibly when the materials are withdrawn, might expire, and die like fire, which else would rage for ever. Jesus fled, undertook a sad journey, in which the roughness of the ways, his own tenderness, the youth of his mother, the old age of his supposed father, the smallness of their viaticum and accommodation for their voyage, the no-kindred they were to go to, hopeless of comforts and exterior supplies, were so many circumstances of poverty, and lesser strokes of the persecution : things that himself did choose to demonstrate

the verity of his nature, the infirmity of his person, the humility of his spirit, the austerity of his undertaking, the burthen of his charge, and by which he did teach us the same virtues he then expressed, and also consigned this permission to all his disciples in future ages, that they also may fly from their persecutors, when the case is so that their work is not done ; that is, they may glorify God with their lives more than with their death. And of this they are ascertained by the arguments of prudent account ; for sometimes we are called to glorify God by dying, and the interest of the church, and the faith of many, may be concerned in it ; then we must abide by it. In other cases it is true that Demosthenes said in apology for his own escaping from a lost field, " A man that runs away may fight again." And St. Paul made use of a guard of soldiers to rescue him from the treachery of the Jewish rulers, and of a basket to escape from the inquisition of the governor of Damascus, and the primitive Christians of grots and subterraneous retirements, and St. Athanasius of a fair lady's house, and others of deserts and graves ; as knowing it was no shame to fly when their master himself had fled, that his time and his work might be fulfilled ; and when it was, he then laid his life down.

5. It is hard to set down particular rules that may indefinitely guide all persons in the stating of their own case ; because all things that depend upon circumstances are alterable unto infinite. But as God's glory and the good of the church are the great considerations to be carried before us all the way, and in proportions to them we are to determine and judge our questions, so also our infirmities are allowable in the scrutiny : for I doubt not but God intended it a mercy and a compliance with human weakness, when he gave us this permission ; as well as it was a design to secure the opportunities of his service, and the consummation

of his own work by us. And since our fears, and the incommodities of flight, and the sadness of exile, and the insecurities and inconveniences of a strange and new abode, are part of the persecution (provided that God's glory be not certainly and apparently neglected, nor the church evidently scandalized by our flight) all interpretations of the question in favour of ourselves, and the declension of that part which may tempt us to apostacy, or hazard our confidence, and the choosing the lesser part of the persecution, is not against the rule of faith, and always hath in it less glory, but oftentimes more security.

6. But thus far Herod's ambition transported him, even to resolutions of murder of the highest person, the most glorious and the most innocent upon earth ; and it represents that passion to be the most troublesome and vexatious thing which can afflict the sons of men. Virtue hath not half so much trouble in it. It sleeps quietly without startings and affrighting fancies, it looks cheerfully, smiles with much serenity, and though it laughs not often, yet it is ever delightful in the apprehensions of some faculty ; it fears no man, nor anything, nor is it discomposed, and hath no concernments in the great alterations of the world, and entertains death like a friend, and reckons the issues of it as the greatest of its hopes : but ambition is full of distractions, it teems with stratagems, and is swelled with expectation as with a tympany, and sleeps sometimes as the wind in a storm, still and quiet for a minute, that it may burst out into an impetuous blast, till the cordage of his heartstrings crack ; fears when none is nigh, and prevents things which never had intention, and falls under the inevitability of such accidents which either could not be foreseen or not prevented. It is an infinite labour to make a man's self miserable, and the utmost acquisition is so goodly a purchase, that he makes his days full of sorrow to enjoy the

troubles of a three years' reign; for Herod lived but three years, or five at the most, after the flight of Jesus into Egypt. And therefore there is no greater unreasonableness in the world than in the designs of ambition: for it makes the present certainly miserable, unsatisfied, troublesome, and discontent, for the uncertain acquisition of an honour which nothing can secure; and besides a thousand possibilities of miscarrying, it relies upon no greater certainty than our life, and when we are dead, all the world sees who was the fool. But it is a strange caitiveness and baseness of disposition of men, so furiously and insatiably to run after perishing and uncertain interests, in defiance of all the reason and religion of the world; and yet to have no appetite to such excellences which satisfy reason, and content the spirit, and create great hopes, and ennoble our expectation, and are advantages to communities of men and public societies, and which all wise men teach, and all religion commands.

7. And it is not amiss to observe how Herod vexed himself extremely upon a mistake. The child Jesus was born a king, but it was a king of all the world, not confined within the limits of a province, like the weaker beauties of a torch to shine in one room; but, like the sun, his empire was over all the world; and if Herod would have become but his tributary, and paid him the acknowledgments of his Lord, he should have had better conditions than under Cæsar, and yet have been as absolute in his own Jewry as he was before. "His kingdom was not of this world," and he that gives heavenly kingdoms to all his servants, would not have stooped to have taken up Herod's petty coronet. But as it is a very vanity which ambition seeks, so it is a shadow that disturbs and discomposes all its motions and apprehensions.

8. And the same mistake caused calamities to descend upon the Church; for some of the persecutions commenced upon the pretence that

Christianity was an enemy to Government: but the pretence was infinitely unreasonable. and therefore had the fate of senseless allegations; it disbanded presently: for no external accident did so incorporate the excellency of Christ's religion into the hearts of men, as the innocency of the men, their inoffensive deportment, the modesty of their designs, their great humility and obedience, a life expressly in enmity and contestation against secular ambition. And it is to be feared that the mingling human interests with religion will deface the image Christ hath stamped upon it. Certain it is, the metal is much abated by so impure alloy, while the Christian prince serves his end of ambition, and bears arms upon his neighbour's country for the service of religion, making Christ's kingdom to invade Herod's rights; and in the state ecclesiastical, secular interests have so deep a portion, that there are snares laid to tempt a persecution, and men are invited to sacrilege, while the revenues of a Church are a fair fortune for a prince. I make no scruple to find fault with painters, that picture the poor saints with rich garments; for though they deserved better, yet they had but poor ones: and some have been tempted to cheat the saint, not out of ill will to his sanctity, but love to his shrine, and to the beauty of the clothes, with which some imprudent persons have of old time dressed their images. So it is in the fate of the Church; persecution and the robes of Christ were her portion and her clothing, and when she is dressed up in gaudy fortunes, it is no more than she deserves, but sometimes it is occasion, that the devil cheats her of her holiness, and the men of the world sacrilegiously cheat her of her riches: and the when God hath reduced her to that poverty he first promised and intended to her, the persecution ceases, and sanctity returns, and God curses the sacrilege, and stirs up men's minds to religious donatives; and all is well till she grows rich again. And

if it be dangerous in any man to be rich, and discomposes his steps in his journey to eternity ; it is not then so proportionable to the analogy of Christ's poverty and the inheritance of the Church, to be sedulous in acquiring great temporalities, and putting princes in jealousy, and states into care for securities, lest all the temporal should run into ecclesiastical possession.

9. If the Church have by the active piety of a credulous, a pious, and less observant age, been endowed with great possessions, she hath rules enough, poor enough, and necessities, to expend what she hath with advantage to religion : but then all she gets by it is, the trouble of an unthankful, a suspected and unsatisfying dispensation ; and the Church is made by evil persons a scene of ambition and stratagem ; and to get a German bishopric is to be a prince ; and to defend with niceness and suits of law every custom or lesser rite, even to the breach of charity and the scandal of religion, is called a duty : and every single person is bound to to forgive injuries, and to quit his right rather than his charity ; but if it is not a duty in the Church also, in them whose life should be excellent to the degree of example. I would fain know if there be not greater care taken to secure the *ecclesiastical revenue*, than the public charity and the honour of religion in the strict piety of the clergy ; for as the not engaging in suits may occasion hold people to wrong the Church, so the necessity of engaging is an occasion of losing charity and of great scandal. I find not fault with a free revenue of the church ; it is in some sense necessary to governors, and to preserve the consequents of authority ; but I represent that such this occasion of much mischief to the Church, and less holiness ; and in all cases respect should be had to the *design* of Christianity, to the prophecies of Jesus, to the promised lot of the Church, to the dangers of riches, to the excellences, and advantages, and rewards of poverty ;

and if the Church have enough to perform all her duties and obligations cheerfully, let her of all societies be *soonest* content. If she have plenty, let her use it temperately and charitably ; if she have not, let her not be querulous and troublesome. But however it should be thought upon, that though in judging the *quantum* of the Church's portion, the world thinks every thing too much, yet *we* must be careful we do not judge every thing too little ; and if our fortune be safe between envy and contempt, it is much mercy. If it be despicable, it is safe for ecclesiastics, though it may be accidentally inconvenient or less profitable to others ; but if it be great, public experience hath made demonstration, that it mingles with the world, and dirties those fingers which are instrumental in consecration and the more solemn rites of Christianity.

10. Jesus fled from the persecution ; as he did not stand it out, so he did not stand out against it ; he was careful to transmit no precedent or encouragement of resisting tyrannous princes, when they offer violence to religion and our lives. He would not stand disputing for privileges, nor calling in auxiliaries from the Lord of hosts, who could have spared him many legions of angels, every single spirit being able to have defeated all Herod's power ; but he knew it was a hard lesson to learn patience, and all the excuses in the world would be sought out to discourage such a doctrine by which we are taught to die, or lose all we have, or suffer inconveniences at the will of a tyrant : we need no ~~any~~ *authentic* examples, much less doctrines, to invite men to war, from which we see Christian princes cannot be restrained with the engagements and peaceful theorems of an excellent and a holy religion, nor subjects kept from rebelling by the interests of all religions in the world, nor by the necessities and reasonableness of obedience, nor the endearments of all public societies of men ; one word or an intimation

from Christ would have sounded an alarm, and put us into postures of defence, when all Christ's excellent sermons and rare exemplar actions cannot tie our hands. But it is strange now, that of all men in the world Christians should be such *fighting* people, or that Christian subjects should lift up a thought against a Christian prince, when they had no intimation of encouragement from their Master; but many from him, to endear obedience, and humility, and patience, and charity; and these four make up the whole analogy, and represent the chief design and meaning of Christianity in its moral constitution.

11. But Jesus, when himself was safe, could also have secured the poor babes of Bethlehem, with thousands of diversions and avocations of Herod's purposes, or by discovering his own escape in some safe manner not unknown to the divine wisdom; but yet it did not so please God. He is Lord of his creatures, and hath absolute dominion over our lives; and he had an end of glory to serve upon these babes, and an end of justice upon Herod: and to the children he made such compensation, that they had no reason to complain that they were so soon made stars, when they shined in their little orbs and participations of eternity: for so the sense of the church hath been, that they having died the death of martyrs, though incapable of making the choice, God supplied the defects of their will by his own entertainment of the thing; that as their misery and their death, so also their glorification might have the same author in the same manner of causality, even by a peremptory and unconditioned determination in these particulars. This sense is pious, and nothing unreasonable, considering that all circumstances of the thing make the case particular; but the immature death of other infants is a sadder story: for though I have no warrant or thought that it is ill with them after death, and in what manner or degree of well-

being they are, there is no revelation;* yet I am not of opinion, that the securing of so low a condition as theirs, in all reason is like to be, will make recompence, or is an equal blessing with the possibilities of such an eternity, as is proposed to them, who in the use of reason and a holy life, glorify God with a free obedience; for if it were otherwise, it were no blessing to live till the use of reason, and fools and babes were in the best, because in the securest condition, and certain expectation of equal glories.

12. As soon as Herod was dead, (for the divine vengeance waited his own time for his arrest) the angel presently brought Joseph word. The holy family was full of content and indifferency, not solicitous for return, not distrustful of the divine Providence, full of poverty, and sanctity, and content, waiting God's time,

* Montgomery, (there is only *one*) has ventured farther than Taylor. Not too far, however; for no one can shew or conceive any *moral* purpose, that could be answered by the exclusion of infants from heaven, or by their inferiority in heaven. Theirs cannot, indeed be "such an eternity," as that of faithful servants, who have "well done; but, who does not feel, that this is something akin to it?"

"Beneath the shadow of the tree of life—

I marked those rescued infants, in their schools,
By spirits of just men made perfect, taught
The glorious lessons of redeeming love.
Yea, in the raptures of that hour, though songs
Of cherubim to golden lyres and trumpets,
And the redeemed upon the sea of glass,
With voices like the sound of many waters,
Came on mine ear,
The small, sweet accents of those little children,
Pouring out all the gladness of their souls
In love, joy, gratitude, and praise to Him—
Him, who had loved, and washed them with his blood.
These were to me the most transporting strains,
Amidst the hallelujahs of all heaven!
The shrill Hosannahs of the infant choir,
Singing in that eternal temple, brought
Tears to mine eye, which seraphs had been glad
To weep; could they have felt the sympathy,
That melted all my soul, when I beheld
How condescending Deity thus deigned,
Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings here,
To perfect his high praise: the harp of heaven
Had lacked its least, but not its meanest string,
Had children not been taught to play upon it."

PELICAN ISLAND.

at the return of which God delayed not to recall them from exile; out of Egypt he called his Son, and directed Joseph's fear and course, that he should divert to a place in the jurisdiction of Philip, where the heir of Herod's cruelty, Archelaus, had nothing to do. And this very series of providence and care God expresses to all his sons by adoption; and will determine the time, and set bounds to every persecution, and punish the instruments, and ease our pains, and refresh our sorrows, and give quietness to our fears, and deliverance from our troubles, and sanctify it all, and give a crown at last, and all in his good time, if we wait the coming of the angel, and in the mean time do our duty with care, and sustain our temporals with indifferency: and in all our troubles and displeasing accidents we may call to mind, that God by his holy and most reasonable providence hath so ordered it, that the spiritual advantages we may receive from the holy use of such incommunities are of great recompense and interest, and that in such accidents the holy Jesus, having gone before us in precedent, does go along with us by love and fair assistances; and that makes the present condition infinitely more eligible than the greatest splendour of secular fortune.

THE PRAYER.

O blessed and eternal God, who didst suffer thy holy Son to fly from the violence of an enraged prince, and didst choose to defend him in the ways of his infirmity by hiding himself,

and by a voluntary exile; be thou a defence to all thy faithful people whenever persecution arises against them, send them the ministry of angels to direct them into ways of security, and let thy holy Spirit guide them in the paths of sanctity, and let thy providence continue its custody over their persons, till the times of refreshment and the day of redemption shall return. Give, O Lord, to thy whole Church sanctity and zeal, and the confidences of a holy faith, boldness of confession, humility, content, and resignation of spirit, generous contempt of the world, and unmingled desires of thy glory and the edification of thy elect; that no secular interests disturb her duty, or discompose her charity, or depress her hopes, or in any unequal degree possess her affections and pollute her spirit; but preserve her from the snares of the world and the devil, from the rapine and greedy desires of sacrilegious persons; and in all conditions, whether of affluence or want, may she still promote the interests of religion; that when plenteousness is within her palaces, and peace in her walls, that condition may then be best for her; and when she is made as naked as Jesus in his passion, then poverty may be best for her. That in all estates she may glorify thee, and in all accidents and changes thou mayest sanctify and bless her, and at last bring her to the eternal riches and abundances of glory, where no persecution shall disturb her rest. Grant this for sweet Jesus' sake, who suffered exile and hard journies, and all the inconveniences of a friendless person, in a strange province; to whom with thee and the eternal Spirit be glory for ever, and blessing in all generations of the world, and for ever and ever. Amen.

SECTION VII.

OF THE YOUNGER YEARS OF JESUS, AND HIS DISPUTATION WITH THE DOCTORS IN THE TEMPLE.

FROM the return of this holy family to Judea, and their habitation in Nazareth, till the blessed child Jesus was twelve years of age, we have nothing transmitted to us out of any authentic record, but that they went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. "And when Jesus was twelve years old," and was in the holy city attending upon the paschal rites and solemn sacrifices of the law, his parents, "having fulfilled the days of their festivity, went homeward, supposing the child had been in the caravan among his friends, and so they erred for the space of a whole day's journey; and when they sought him, and found him not, they returned to Jerusalem full of fears and sorrow."

2. No fancy can imagine the doubt, the apprehensions, the possibilities of mischief, and the tremblings of heart, which the holy virgin-mother felt thronging about her fancy and understanding, but such a person who hath been tempted to the danger of a violent fear and transportation, by apprehension of the loss of a hope greater than a miracle; her discourses with herself could have nothing of distrust, but much of sadness and wonder, and the indetermination of her thoughts was a trouble great as the passion of her love: "possibly an angel might have carried him she knew not whither; or it may be the son of Herod had gotten the prey, which his cruel father missed; or he was sick, or detained out of curiosity and wonder, or any thing but what was right." And by this time she was come to Jerusalem, and having spent three days in her sad and holy pursuit of

her lost jewel, despairing of the prosperous event of any human diligence, as in all other cases she had accustomed, she made her address to God, and entering the temple to pray, God, that knew her desires, prevented her with the blessings of goodness, and there her sorrow was changed into joy and wonder; for there she found her holy Son "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions."

3. "And when they saw him, they were amazed, and so were all that heard him, at his understanding and answers;" beyond his education, beyond his experience, beyond his years, and even beyond the common spirits of the best men, discoursing up to the height of a prophet, with the clearness of an angel, and the infallibility of inspiration: for here it was verified in the highest and most literal signification, that "out of the mouth of babes God hath ordained strength;" but this was the strength of argument, and science of the highest mysteries of religion and secret philosophy.

4. Glad were the parents of the child to find him illustrated with a miracle, concerning which when he had given them such an account that "they understood not," but yet "Mary laid up in her heart," as that this was part of his employment and "his Father's business, he returned with them to Nazareth, and was subject to his parents;" where he lived in all holiness and humility, shewing great signs of wisdom, endearing himself to all that beheld his conversation, did nothing less than might become

the great expectation which his miraculous birth had created of him ; for "he increased in wisdom and stature, and favour with God and man," still growing in proportion to his great beginnings to a miraculous excellency of grace, sweetness of demeanour, and excellency of understanding.

5. They that love to serve God in hard questions, use to dispute whether Christ did truly or in appearance only increase in wisdom. For being personally united to the word, and being the eternal wisdom of the Father, it seemed to them, that a plenitude of wisdom was as natural to the whole person, as to the divine nature. But others, fixing their belief upon the words of the story, which equally affirms Christ as properly to have "increased in favour with God as with man, in wisdom as in stature," they apprehend no inconvenience in affirming it to belong to the verity of human nature, to have degrees of understanding as well as of other perfections : and although the humanity of Christ made up the same person with the divinity, yet they think the divinity, still to be free, even in those communications which were imparted to his inferior nature, and the Godhead might as well suspend the emanation of all the treasures of wisdom upon the humanity for a time, as he did the beatifical vision, which most certainly was not imparted in the interval of his sad and dolorous passion. But whether it were truly or in appearance, in habit, or in exercise of act, by increase of notion or experience, it is certain the promotions of the holy child were great, admirable, and as full of wonder as of sanctity, and sufficient to entertain the hopes and expectations of Israel with preparations and dispositions, as to satisfy their wonder for the present, so to accept him at the time of his publication, they having no reason to be scandalized at the smallness, improbability, and indifferency of his first beginnings.

6. But the holy child had also an employ-

ment which he undertook in obedience to his supposed father, for exercise and example of humility, and for the support of that holy family which was dear in the eyes of God, but not very splendid by the opulency of a free and indulgent fortune. He wrought in the trade of a carpenter, and when Joseph died, which happened before the manifestation of Jesus unto Israel, he wrought alone, and was no more called the carpenter's son, but the carpenter himself. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" said his offended countrymen. And in this condition the blessed Jesus did abide till he was thirty years old : for he that came to fulfil the law, would not suffer one title of it to pass unaccomplished ; for by the law of the nation and custom of the religion no priest was to officiate, or prophet was to preach, before he was thirty years of age.

Considerations upon the Disputation of Jesus with the Doctors in the Temple.

1. JOSEPH and Mary, being returned unto Nazareth, were sedulous to enjoy the privileges of their country, the opportunities of religion, the public address to God, in the rites, festivals, and solemnities of the temple : they had been long grieved with the impurities and idol-rites which they with sorrow had observed to be done in Egypt ; and being deprived of the blessings of those holy societies and employments they used to enjoy in Palestine, at their return came to the office of their religion with appetites of fire, and keen as the evening wolf ; and all the joys which they should have received in respiration and distinct emanations, if they had kept their anniversaries at Jerusalem, all that united they received in the duplication of their joys at their return, and in filling themselves with the

refection and holy viands of religion. For so God uses to satisfy the longings of holy people, when a persecution has shut up the beautiful gates of the temple, or denied to them opportunities of access: although God hears the prayers they make with their windows towards Jerusalem, with their hearts opened with desires of the public communions, and sends them a prophet with a private meal, as Habakkuk came to Daniel, yet he fills their hearts when the year of jubilee returns, and the people sing *In convertendo*, the song of joy for their redemption. For as of all sorrows the deprivations and eclipses of religion are the saddest, and of the worst and most inconvenient consequence; so in proportion are the joys of spiritual plenty and religious returns; the communion of saints being like the primitive corban, a repository to feed all the needs of the Church, or like a taper joined to a torch, itself is kindled, and increases the other's flames.

2. They failed not to go to Jerusalem: for all those holy prayers and ravishments of love, those excellent meditations and intercourses with God, their private readings and discourses, were but entertainments and satisfaction of their necessities, that lived with them during their retirements; but it was a feast when they went to Jerusalem, and the freer and more indulgent refection of the spirit; for in public solemnities God opens his treasures, and pours out his grace more abundantly. Private devotions and secret offices of religion are like refreshing of a garden with the distilling drops of a water-pot; but addresses in the temple, and serving God in the public communion of saints, is like rain from heaven, where the offices are described by a public spirit, heightened by the greater portions of assistance, and receive advantages by the adunations and symbols of charity, and increment by their distinct title to promises appropriate even to their assembling, and mutual support, by the piety of example, by the com-

munication of counsels, by the awfulness of public observation, and the engagements of holy customs. For religion is a virtue, it is the ligature of souls, and the great instrument of the conservation of bodies politic, and is united in a common object, the God of all the world, and is managed by public ministeries, by sacrifice, adoration, and prayer, in which with variety of circumstances indeed, but with infinite consent and union of design, all the sons of Adam are taught to worship God; and it is a publication of God's honour, its very purpose being to declare to all the world how great things God hath done for us, whether in public donatives or private missives; so that the very design, temper, and constitution of religion is to be a public address to God: and although God is present in closets, and there also distils his blessings in small rain, yet to the societies of religion and publication of worship, as we are invited by the great blessings and advantages of communion, so also we are in some proportions more straightly limited by the analogy and exigence of the duty. It is a persecution when we are forced from public worshipings; no man can hinder our private addresses to God, every man can build a chapel in his breast, and himself be the priest, and his heart the sacrifice, and every foot of glebe he treads on be the altar; and this no tyrant can prevent. If then there can be persecution in the offices of religion, it is the prohibition of public profession and communions, and therefore he that denies to himself the opportunities of public rites and conventions, is his own persecutor.

3. But when Jesus was twelve years old, and his parents had finished their offices, and returned filled with the pleasures of religion, they missed this child, and "sought him amongst their kindred, but there they found him not;" for whoever seeks Jesus must seek him in the offices of religion, in the temple, not amongst the engagements and pursuits of worldly inter-

ests : " I forgot also mine own father's house," said David, the father of this holy child ; and and so must we, when we run in an inquiry after the Son of David. But our relinquishing must not be a dereliction of duty, but of engagement ; our affections toward kindred must always be with charity, and according to the endearments of our relation, but without such immersion, and adherences as either contradict or lessen our duty towards God.

4. It was a sad effect of their pious journey to lose the joy of their family, and the hopes of all the world : but it often happens that after spiritual employments God seems to absent himself, and withdraw the sensible effects of his presence, that we may seek him with the same diligence and care and holy fears with which the holy virgin-mother sought the blessed Jesus. And it is a design of great mercy in God to take off the light from the eyes of a holy person, that he may not be abused with complacencies and too confident opinions and reflections upon his own fair performances. For we usually judge of the well or ill of our devotions and services by what we feel ; and we think God rewards every thing in the present, and by proportion to our own expectations ; and if we feel a present rejoicing of spirit, all is well with us, the smoke of the sacrifice ascended right in a holy cloud : but if we feel nothing of comfort, then we count it a prodigy and ominous, and we suspect ourselves, (and most commonly we have reason.) Such irradiations of cheerfulness are always welcome, but it is not always anger that takes them away : the cloud removed from before the camp of Israel, and stood before the host of Pharaoh ; but this was a design of ruin to the Egyptians, and of security to Israel : and if those bright angels that go with us to direct our journeys, remove out of our sight and stand behind us, it is not always an argument that the anger of the Lord is gone out against us ; but such decays of sense and clouds of spirit

are excellent conservators of humility, and restrain those intemperances and vainer thoughts which we are prompted to in the gaiety of our spirits.

5. But we often give God cause to remove and for a while to absent himself ; and his doing of it sometimes upon the just provocations of our demerits, makes us at other times, with good reason, to suspect ourselves even in our best actions. But sometimes we are vain, or remiss, or pride invades us in the darkness and incuriousness of our spirits, and we have a secret sin which God would have us to inquire after ; and when we suspect every thing, and condemn ourselves with strictest and most angry sentence, then, it may be, God will with a ray of light break through the cloud ; if not, it is nothing the worse for us : for although the visible remonstrance and face of things, in all the absences and withdrawings of Jesus, be the same, yet if a sin be the cause of it, the withdrawing is a taking away his favour and his love ; but if God does it to secure thy piety, and to inflame thy desires, or to prevent a crime, then he withdraws a gift only, nothing of his love ; and yet the darkness of the spirit and sadness seem equal. It is hard in these cases to discover the cause, as it is nice to judge the condition of the effect ; and therefore it is prudent to ascertain our condition by improving our care and our religion ; and in all accidents to make no judgment concerning God's favour by what we feel, but by what we do.

6. When the holy virgin with much religion and sadness had sought her joy, at last she found him disputing among the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions ; and besides that, he now first opened a fontinel, and there sprang out an excellent rivulet from his abyss of wisdom, he consigned this truth to his disciples, " That they who mean to be doctors and teach others, must in their first accesses and degrees of discipline, learn of those whom God and

public order hath set over us in the mysteries of religion.

THE PRAYER.

Blessed and most holy Jesus, fountain of grace and comfort, treasure of wisdom and spiritual emanations, be pleased to abide with me for ever by the inhabitation of thy interior assistances and refreshments; and give me a corresponding love, acceptable and unstained purity, care and watchfulness over my ways, that I may never, by provoking thee to anger, cause thee to remove thy dwelling, or draw a cloud before thy holy face: but if thou art pleased upon a design of charity or trial to

cover my eyes, that I may not behold the bright rays of thy favour, nor be refreshed with spiritual comforts; let thy love support my spirit by ways insensible, and in all my needs give me such a portion as may be instrumental and incentive to performance of my duty; and in all accidents let me continue to seek thee by prayers, and humiliation, and frequent desires, and the strictness of a holy life; that I may follow thy example, pursue thy footsteps, be supported by thy strength, guided by thy hand, enlightened by thy favour, and may at last, after a persevering holiness and an unwearied industry, dwell with thee in the regions of light and eternal glory, where there shall be no fears of parting from the habitations of felicity, or the union and fruition of thy presence, O blessed and most holy Jesus. Amen.

SECTION VIII.

OF THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, PREPARATIVE TO THE MANIFESTATION OF JESUS.

1. WHEN Herod had drunk so great a draught of blood at Bethlehem, and sought for more from the hill country, Elizabeth carried her son into the wilderness, there in the desert places and recesses to hide him from the fury of that beast, where she attended him with as much care and tenderness as the affections and fears of a mother could express in those fruitless solitudes. The child was about eighteen months old when he first fled to the sanctuary; but after forty days his mother died, and his father Zachary at the time of his ministration, which happened about this time, was killed in the court of the temple; so that the child was exposed to all the dangers and infelicities of an orphan, in a place of solitariness and discomfort, at a time when a bloody king endeavoured his destruction. But when his father and mother were taken from him, the Lord took him up. For, according to the tradition of the Greeks, God deputed an angel to be his nourisher and guardian, as he had formerly done to Ishmael who dwelt in the wilderness, and to Elias when he fled from the rage of Ahab; so to this child, who came in the spirit of Elias, to make demonstration that there can be no want where God undertakes the care and provision.

2. The entertainment that St. John's angel gave him, was such as the wilderness did afford, and such as might dispose him to a life of austerity; for there he continued spending his time in meditations, contemplation, prayer, affections, and colloquies with God, eating locusts and wild honey, not clothed in soft, but

a hairy garment, and a leathern girdle, till he was thirty years of age. And then, "being the fifteenth year of Tiberius, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, the word of God came unto John in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching *and baptizing*."

3. This John, according to the prophecies of him, and the designation of his person by the Holy Ghost, was the forerunner of Christ, sent to dispose the people for his entertainment, and prepare his ways; and therefore it was necessary his person should be so extraordinary and full of sanctity, and so clarified by great concurrences and wonder in the circumstances of his life, as might gain credit and reputation to the testimony he was to give concerning his Lord the Saviour of the world. And so it happened.

4. For as the Baptist, while he was in the wilderness, became the pattern of solitary and contemplative life, a school of virtue, and example of sanctity and singular austerity; so at his emigration from the places of his retirement, he seemed, what indeed he was, a rare and excellent personage: and the wonders which were great at his birth, the prediction of his conception by an angel, which never had before happened but in the persons of Isaac and Sampson, the contempt of the world which he bore about him, his mortified countenance and deportment, his austere and eremitical life, his vehement spirit and excellent zeal in preaching, created so great opinions of him among the people, that "all held him for a prophet" in his



office, for a heavenly person in his own particular, and a rare example of sanctity and holy life to all others : and all this being made solemn and ceremonious by his baptism, he prevailed so, that he made excellent and apt preparations for the Lord's appearing ; for there went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the regions round about Jordan, and were baptized of him, confessing their sins.

5. The Baptist having by so heavenly means won upon the affections of all men, his sermons and his testimony concerning Christ were the more likely to be prevalent and accepted ; and the sum of them was repentance and dereliction of sins, and bringing forth the fruits of good life ; in the promoting of which doctrine he was a severe reprehender of the Pharisees and Sadducees, he exhorted the people to works of mercy, the publicans to do justice, and to decline oppression, the soldiers to abstain from plundering, and doing violence or rapine : and publishing that " he was not the Christ, that he only baptized with water, but the Messiah should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire ;" he finally denounced judgment and great severities to all the world of impenitents, even abscission and " fire unquenchable." And from this time forward, viz. " From the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent take it by force." For now the gospel began to dawn, and John was like the morning star, or the blushings springing from the windows of the east, foretelling the approach of the Sun of Righteousness : and as St. John the Baptist laid the first rough, hard, and unhewn stone of this building, in mortification, self-denial, and doing violence to our natural affections ; so it was continued by the master builder himself, who propounded the glories of the crown of the heavenly kingdom, to them only who should climb the cross to reach it. Now it was that multitudes should throng and crowd to enter in at the strait gate,

and press into the kingdom ; and the younger brothers should snatch the inheritance from the elder, the unlikely from the more likely, the Gentiles from the Jews, the strangers from the natives, the publicans and harlots from the Scribes and Pharisees, who, like violent persons, shall by their importunity, obedience, watchfulness and diligence, snatch the kingdom from them to whom it was first offered ; and " Jacob shall be loved, and Esau rejected."

Considerations upon the Preaching of John the Baptist.

1. FROM the disputation of Jesus with the doctors, to the time of his manifestation to Israel, which was eighteen years, the holy child dwelt in Nazareth in great obedience to his parents, in exemplary modesty, singular humility, working with his hands in his supposed father's trade, for the support of his own and his mother's necessities, and that he might bear the curse of Adam, that " in the sweat of his brows he should eat his bread : " all the while " he increased in favour with God and man," sending forth excellent testimonies of a rare spirit and a wise understanding, in the temperate instances of such a conversation to which his humility and great obedience had engaged him. But all this while the stream ran under ground ; and though little bubblings were discerned in all the course, and all the way, men looked upon him as an excellent person, diligent in his calling, wise and humble, temperate and just, pious and rarely tempered ; yet at the manifestation of John the Baptist, he brake forth like the stream from the bowels of the earth, or the sun from a cloud, and gave us a precedent that we should not shew our lights to minister to vanity, but then only when God, and public order, and just dispositions of men call for a manifestation : and yet the ages of

men have been so forward in prophetic ministries, and to undertake ecclesiastical employment, that the viciousness, and indiscretions, and scandals, which the Church of God feels as great burthens upon the tenderness of her spirit, are in great part owing to the neglect of this instance of the prudence and modesty of the holy Jesus.

2. But now the time appointed was come, the Baptist comes forth upon the theatre of Palestine, a forerunner of the office and publication of Jesus, and by the great reputation of his sanctity prevailed upon the affections and judgment of the people, who with much ease believed his doctrine, when they had reason to approve his life; for the good example of the preacher is always the most prevailing homily, his life is his best sermon. He that will raise affections in his auditory must affect their eyes; for we seldom see the people weep if the orator laughs loud and loosely; and there is no reason to think that his discourse should work more with me than himself. If his arguments be fair and spacious, I shall think them fallacies, while they have not faith with him; and what necessity for me to be temperate, when he that tells me so sees no such need, but hopes to go to heaven without it? Or if the duty be necessary, I shall learn the definition of temperance, and the latitudes of my permission, and the bounds of lawful and unlawful, by the exposition of his practice; if he binds a burthen upon my shoulders, it is but reason I should look for him to bear his portion too. "Good works convince more than miracles;" and the power of ejecting devils is not so great proof, that Christian religion came from God, as is the holiness of the doctrine, and its efficacy and productions upon the hearty professors of the institution. St. Pachomius, when he wore the military girdle under Constantine the emperor, came to a city of Christians, who having heard that the army in which he then marched, was almost starved

for want of necessary provisions, of their own charity relieved them speedily and freely. He wondering at their so free and cheerful dispensation, inquired what kind of people these were whom he saw so bountiful. It was answered they were Christians, whose profession it is to hurt no man, and to do good to every man. The pleased soldier was convinced of the excellency of that religion which brought forth men so good and so pious, and he loved the mother for the children's sake, threw away his girdle, and became a Christian, and religious, and a saint. And it was Tertullian's great argument in behalf of Christians, "See how they love one another, how every man is ready to die for his brother:" it was a living argument and a sensible demonstration of the purity of the fountain, from whence such limpid waters issued. But so John the Baptist made himself a fit instrument of preparation, and so must all the Christian clergy be fitted for the dissemination of the gospel of Jesus.

3. The Baptist had till this time, that is, about thirty years, lived in the wilderness under the discipline of the Holy Ghost, under the tuition of angels, in conversation with God, in great mortification and disaffections to the world, his garments rugged and uneasy, his meat plain, necessary, and without variety, his employment prayers and devotion, his company wild beasts, in ordinary; in extraordinary, messengers from heaven: and all this not undertaken of necessity to subdue a bold lust, or to punish a loud crime, but to become more holy and pure from the lesser stains and insinuations of too free infirmities, and to prepare himself for the great ministry of serving the holy Jesus in his publication. Thirty years he lived in great austerity; and it was a rare patience and exemplary mortification: we use not to be so pertinacious in any pious resolutions, but our purposes disband upon the sense of the first violence; we are free and confident in resolving

too fast when our bellies are full, but when we are called upon by the first necessities of nature, our zeal is cool, and dissoluble into air upon the first temptation; and we are not upheld in the violence of a short austerity, without faintings, and repentances to be repented of, and inquirings after the vow is past, and searching for excuses and desires to reconcile our nature and our conscience; unless our necessity be great, and our sin clamorous, and our conscience laden, and no peace to be had without it: and it is well if upon any reasonable grounds we can be brought to suffer contradictions of nature, for the advantages of grace. But it should be remembered, that the Baptist did more upon a less necessity; and possibly the greatness of the example may entice us on a little farther than the customs of the world or our own indevotions would engage us.

4. But after the expiration of a definite time, John came forth from his solitude, and served God in societies. He served God and the content of his own spirit by his conversation with angels and dialogues with God, so long as he was in the wilderness; and it might be some trouble to him to mingle with the impurities of men, amongst whom he was sure to observe such recesses from perfection, such violation of all things sacred, so great despite done to all ministeries of religion, that to him, who had no experience or neighbourhood of actions criminal, it must needs be to his sublimed and clarified spirit more punitive and afflictive than his hairy shirt, and his ascetic diet was to his body; but now himself, that tried both, was best able to judge which state of life was of greatest advantage and perfection.

5. "In his solitude he did breathe more pure inspiration, heaven was more open, God was more familiar" and frequent in his visitations. In the wilderness his company was angels, his employment meditations and prayer, his temptations simple and from within, from the

impotent and lesser rebellions of a mortified body, his occasions of sin as few as his examples, his condition such, that if his soul were at all busy, his life could not easily be other than the life of angels; for his work and recreation, and his visits, and his retirements, could be nothing but the variety and differing circumstances of his piety: his inclinations to society made it necessary for him to repeat his addresses to God; for his being a sociable creature, and yet in solitude, made that his communion with God; and being partaker of divine communications, should be the satisfaction of his natural desires, and the supply of his singularity and retirement; the discomforts of which made it natural for him to seek out for some refreshment, and therefore to go to heaven for it, he having rejected the solaces of the world already. And all this, besides the innocencies of his silence, which is very great, and to be judged of in proportion to the infinite extravagances of our language, there being no greater "perfection" here to be expected than "not to offend in our tongue." "It was solitude and retirement in which Jesus kept his vigils, the desert places heard him pray, in a privacy he was born, in the wilderness he fed his thousands, upon a mountain apart he was transfigured, upon a mountain he died, and from a mountain he ascended to his Father;" in which retirements his devotion certainly did receive the advantage of convenient circumstances, and himself in such dispositions twice had the opportunities of glory.

6. And yet after these excellences the Spirit of God called the Baptist forth to a more excellent ministry: for in solitude pious persons might go to heaven by the way of prayers and devotion, but in society they might go to Heaven by the way of mercy and charity and dispensations to others. In solitude there are fewer occasions of vices, but there is also

the exercise of fewer virtues ; and the temptations, though they be not from many objects, yet are in some circumstances more dangerous, not only because the worst of evils, spiritual pride, does seldom miss to creep upon those goodly oaks, like ivy, and suck their heart out ; and a great mortifier without some complacencies in himself, or affectations or opinions, or something of singularity, is almost as unusual as virgin purity and unstained thoughts in the Bordelli, (St. Hierom had tried it and found it so by experience, and he it was that said so ;) but also because whatsoever temptation does invade such retired persons, they have privacies enough to act it in, and no eyes upon them but the eye of heaven, no shame to encounter withal, no fears of being discovered : and we know by experience, that a witness of our conversation is a great restraint to the inordination of our actions. Men seek out darkneses and secrecies to commit a sin ; and “ the evil that no man sees, no man reproves ; ” and that makes the temptation bold and confident, and the iniquity easy and ready : so that as they have not so many tempters as they have abroad, so neither have they so many restraints ; their vices are not so many, but they are more dangerous in themselves, and to the world safe and opportune. And as they communicate less with the world, so they do less charity and fewer offices of mercy : no sermons there but when solitude is made popular, and the city removes into the wilderness ; no comforts of a public religion, or visible remonstrances of the communion of saints ; and of all the kinds of spiritual mercy, only one can there properly be exercised, and of the corporeal none at all. And this is true in lives and institutions of less retirement, in proportion to the degree of the solitude : and therefore church-story reports of divers very holy persons, who left their wildernesses and sweetnesses of devotion in their retirement, to

serve God in public by the ways of charity and exterior offices. Thus St. Anthony and Acep-samas came forth to encourage the fainting people to contend to death for the crown of martyrdom ; and Aphraates, in the time of Valens the Arian emperor, came abroad to assist the church in suppressing the flames kindled by the Arian faction. And upon this ground, they that are the greatest admirers of eremitical life call the episcopal function “ the state of perfection,” and a degree of ministerial and honorary excellency beyond the pieties and contemplations of solitude, because of the advantages of gaining souls, and religious conversation, and going to God by doing good to others.

7. John the Baptist united both these lives ; and our blessed Saviour, who is the great precedent of sanctity and prudence, hath determined this question in his own instance ; for he lived a life common, sociable, human, charitable, and public, and yet for the opportunities of especial devotion retired to prayer and contemplation, but came forth speedily ; for the devil never set upon him but in the wilderness, and by the advantage of retirement. For as God hath many, so the devil hath some, opportunities of doing his work in our solitariness. But Jesus reconciled both, and so did John the Baptist, in several degrees and manners : and from both we are taught, that solitude is a good school, but the world is the best theatre ; the institution is best there, but the practice here ; the wilderness hath the advantage of discipline, and society opportunities of perfection ; privacy is the best for devotion, and the public for charity. In both God hath many saints and servants, and from both the devil hath had some.

8. His sermon was an exhortation to repentance and an holy life. He gave particular schedules of duty to several states of persons ; sharply reprov'd the Pharisees for their

hypocrisy and impiety, it being worse in them, because contrary to their rule, their profession, and institution; gently guided others into the ways of righteousness, calling them the straight ways of the Lord; that is, the direct and shortest way to the kingdom; for of all lines the straight is the shortest, and as every angle is a turning out of the way, so every sin is an obliquity, and interrupts the journey. By such discourses and a baptism, he disposed the spirits of men for the entertaining the Messiah and the homilies of the gospel. For John's doctrine was to the sermons of Jesus, as a preface to a discourse; and his baptism was to the new institution and discipline of the kingdom, as the vigils to a holy day; of the same kind in a less degree. But the whole economy of it represents to us, that repentance is the first introduction into the sanctities of Christian religion. The Lord treads upon no paths that are not hallowed and made smooth by the sorrows and cares of contrition, and where the impediments of sin are cleared by dereliction and the succeeding fruits of emendation. But as it related to the Jews, his baptism did signify, by a cognation to their usual rites and ceremonies of ablution and washing Gentile proselytes, that the Jews had so far receded from their duty, and from that holiness which God required of them by the law, that they were in the state of strangers, no better than heathens, and therefore were to be treated, as themselves received Gentile proselytes, by a baptism and a new state of life, before they could be fit for the reception of the Messiah, or be admitted to his kingdom.

9. It was an excellent sweetness of religion that had entirely possessed the soul of the Baptist, that in so great reputation of sanctity, so mighty concourse of people, such great multitudes of disciples and confidants, and such throngs of admirers, he was humble without mixtures of vanity, and confirmed in his temper and piety

against the strength of the most impetuous temptation. And he was tried to some purpose: for when he was tempted to confess himself to be the Christ, he refused it; or to be Elias, or to be accounted that prophet, he refused all such great appellatives, and confessed himself only to be a *voice*, the lowest of entities, whose being depends upon the speaker, just as himself did upon the pleasure of God, receiving form, and publication, and employment, wholly by the will of his Lord, in order to the manifestation of the Word Eternal. It were well that the spirits of men would not arrogate more than their own, though they did not lessen their own just dues. It may concern some end of piety or prudence, that our reputation be preserved by all just means; but never that we assume the dues of others, or grow vain by the spoils of an undeserved dignity. Honours are the rewards of virtue, or of engagement upon offices of trouble and public use; but then they must suppose a preceding worth, or a fair employment. But he that is a plagiarist of others' titles or offices, and dresses himself with their beauties, hath no more solid worth or reputation, than he should have nutriment, if he ate only with their mouth, and slept their slumbers, himself being open and unbound in all the regions of his senses.

THE PRAYER.

O holy and most glorious God, who before the publication of thy eternal Son, the prince of peace, didst send thy servant John Baptist, by the examples of mortification, and the rude austerities of a penitential life, and by the sermons of penance, to remove all the impediments of sin, that the ways of his Lord and ours might be made clear, ready and expedite; be pleased to let thy holy Spirit lead me in the straight

paths of sanctity, without deflexions to either hand, and without the interruption of deadly sin, that I may with facility, zeal, assiduity, and a persevering diligence walk in the ways of the Lord. Be pleased that the axe may be laid to the root of sin, that the whole body of it may be cut down in me, that no fruit of Sodom may grow up to thy displeasure. Thoroughly purge the floor and granary of my heart with thy fan, with the breath of thy diviner Spirit, that it may be a holy repository of graces, and full of benediction and sanctity; that when our Lord shall come, I may at all times be prepared for the entertainment of so divine a guest, apt to lodge him and to feast him, that he may for ever delight to dwell with me. And make me also to dwell with him, sometimes retiring into his recesses and private rooms by contemplation, and admiring of his beauties, and beholding the secrets of his kingdom; and at all other times walking in the courts of the Lord's house by the diligences and labours of repentance and an holy life, till thou shalt please to call me to a nearer communication of thy excellences, which then grant, when by thy gracious assistances I shall have done thy works, and glorified thy holy name, by the strict and never-failing purposes and proportionable endeavours of religion and holiness, through the merits and mercies of Jesus Christ. Amen.

DISCOURSE IV.

Of Mortification and Corporal Austerities.

1. "From the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force," said our blessed Saviour. For now that the new covenant was to be made with man, repentance, which is so great a part of it, being in very many actions a punitive

duty, afflictive and vindictive, from the days of the Baptist (who first, by office and solemnity of design, published this doctrine) violence was done to the inclinations and dispositions of man, and by such violences we were to be possessed of the kingdom. And his example was the best commentary upon his text; he did violence to himself; he lived a life in which the roughness of camel's hair, and the lowest nutriment of locusts and honey of the desert, his life of singularity, his retirement from the sweetnesses of society, his resisting the greatest of temptations, and despising to assume false honours, were instances of that violence, and explications of the doctrine of self-denial and mortification, which are the pedestal of the cross, and the supporters of Christianity, as it is distinguished from all laws, religions, and institutions of the world.

2. Mortification is the one half of Christianity; it is a dying to the world, it is a denying of the will and all its natural desires. An abstinence from pleasure and sensual complacencies, that the flesh being subdued to the spirit, both may join in the service of God, and in the offices of holy religion. It consists in actions of severity and renunciation; it refuses to give entertainment to any vanity, nor uses a freer license in things lawful, lest it be tempted to things unlawful: it kills the lusts of the flesh by taking away its fuel and incentives, and by using to control its appetite, does inure it with more facility to obey the superior faculties: and, in effect, it is nothing, but a great care we sin not, and a prudent and severe using such remedies and instruments which in nature and grace are made apt for the production of our purposes. And it consists in interior and exterior offices; these being but instruments of the interior, as the body is organical or instrumental to the soul, and no part of the duty itself, but as they are advantages to the end, the mortification of the Spirit: which by what-

soever means we have once acquired and do continue, we are disoblged from all other exterior severities, unless by accident they come to be obligatory, and from some other cause.

3. Mortification of the will or the spirit of man, that is the duty ; that the will of man may humbly obey God, and absolutely rule its inferior faculties ; that the inordinations of our natural desires begun by Adam's sin, and continued and increased by our continuing evil customs, may be again placed in the right order ; that since many of the divine precepts are restraints upon our natural desires, we should so deny those appetites that covet after natural satisfactions, that they may not serve themselves by disserving God. For therefore our own wills are our greatest dangers and our greatest enemies, because they tend to courses contradictory to God. God commands us to be humble ; our own desires are to be great, considerable, and high ; and we are never secure enough from contempt, unless we can place our neighbours at our feet. Here therefore we must deny our will and appetites of greatness, for the purchase of humility. God commands temperance and chastity ; our desires and natural proneness break the bands asunder, and entertains dissolutions to the licentiousness of Apicius, or the wantonness of a Mahometan paradise, sacrificing meat and drink-offerings to our appetites, as if our stomachs were the temples of Bel, and making the opportunities of lust to be our dwelling. Here therefore we must deny our own wills, our appetites of gluttony and drunkenness, and our prurient inclinations, for the purchase of temperance and chastity. And every other virtue is, either directly or by accident, a certain instance of this great duty, which is like a Catholicon, purgative of all distemperatures, and is the best preparative and disposition to prayer in the world.

4. For it is a sad consideration, and of secret

reason, that since prayer of all duties is certainly the sweetest and the easiest, it having in it no difficulty or vexatious labour, no weariness of bones, no dimness of eyes or hollow cheeks being directly consequent to it, no natural desire of contradictory quality, nothing of disease, but much of comfort and more of hope in it ; yet we are infinitely averse from it, weary of its length, glad of an occasion to pretermit our offices ; and yet there is no visible cause of such indisposition, nothing in the nature of the thing, nor in the circumstances necessarily appendant to the duty. Something is amiss in us, *and it wanted a name*, till the Spirit of God, by enjoining the duty of mortification, hath taught us to know that *immortification* of spirit is the cause of all our secret and spiritual indispositions : we are so incorporated to the desires of sensual objects, that we feel no relish or gust of the spiritual. It is as if a lion should eat hay, or an ox venison, there is no proportion between the object and the appetite, till by mortification of our first desires our wills are made spiritual, and our apprehensions supernatural and clarified. For as a cook told Dionysius the tyrant, “ the black broth of Lacedæmon would not do well at Syracuse, unless it be tasted by a Spartan's palate ;” so neither can the excellences of heaven be discerned but by a spirit disrelishing the sottish appetites of the world, and accustomed to diviner banquets. And this was mystically signified by the two altars in Solomon's temple ; in the outer court whereof, beasts were sacrificed ; in the inner court, an altar of incense ; the first representing mortification or slaying of our beastly appetites ; the second the offering up our prayers, which are not likely to become a pleasant offertory, unless our impurities be removed by the atonement made by the first sacrifices ; without our spirit be mortified, we neither can love to pray, nor God love to hear us.

5. But there are *three* steps to ascend to this

altar. The first is, to abstain from satisfying our carnal desires in the instances of sin; and although the furnace flames with vehement emissions at some times, yet to walk in the midst of the burning without being consumed, like the children of the captivity; that is the duty even of the most imperfect, and is commonly the condition of those good persons whose interest in secular employments speaks fair, and solicits often, and tempts highly; yet they manage their affairs with habitual justice, and a constant charity, and are temperate in their daily meals, chaste in the solaces of marriage, and pure in their spirits, unmingled with sordid affections in the midst of their possessions and enjoyments. These men are in the world, but they are strangers here; they have a city, but not an abiding one; they are proselytes of the house, but have made no covenant with the world. For though they desire with secular desires, yet it is but for necessities, and then they are content; they use the creatures with freedom and modesty, but never to intemperance and transgression; so that their hands are below, tied there by the necessities of their life; but their hearts are above, lifted up by the abstractions of this first degree of mortification. And this is the first and nicest distinction between a man of the world and a man of God; for this state is a denying our affections nothing but the sin; it enjoys as much of the world as may be consistent with the possibilities of heaven; a little less than this is the state of immortification, and a being in the flesh, which (saith the apostle) cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The flesh must first be separated, and the adherences pared off from the skin, before the parchment be fit to make a schedule for use, or to transmit a record; whatsoever in the sense of the Scripture is flesh, or an enemy to the spirit, if it be not rescinded and mortified, makes that the laws of God cannot be written in our hearts. This is the doctrine St. Paul

taught the church, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." This first mortification is the way of life, if it continues; but its continuance is not secured, till we are advanced towards life by one degree more of this death. For this condition is a state of a daily and dangerous warfare, and many inroads are made by sin, and many times hurt is done and booty carried off; for he that is but thus far mortified, although his dwelling be within the kingdom of grace, yet it is on the borders of it, and hath a dangerous neighbourhood. If we mean to be safe, we must remove into the heart of the land, or carry the war farther off.

6. Secondly, we must not only be strangers here, but we must be dead too, dead unto the world; that is, we must not only deny our vices, but our passions; not only contradict the direct immediate persuasion to a sin, but also cross the inclination to it. So long as our appetites are high and full, we shall never have peace or safety, but the dangers and insecurities of a full war and a potent enemy; we are always disputing the question, ever struggling for life; but when our passions are killed, when our desires are little and low, then grace reigns, then our life is hid with Christ in God, then we have fewer interruptions in the way of righteousness, then we are not so apt to be surprised by sudden eruptions and transportation of passions, and our piety itself is more prudent and reasonable; chosen with a freer election, discerned with clearer understanding, hath more in it of judgment than of fancy, and is more spiritual and angelical. He that is apt to be angry, though he be habitually careful and full of observation that he sin not, may at some time or other be surprised, when his guards are undiligent and without actual expectation of an enemy; but if his anger be dead in him, and the inclination lessened to the indifferency and

gentleness of a child, the man dwells safe, because of the impotency of his enemy, or that he is reduced to obedience, or hath taken conditions of peace. He that hath refused to consent to impure actions to which he was strongly tempted, hath won a victory by fine force, and God hath blessed him well; but an opportunity may betray him instantly, and the sin may be in upon him unawares; unless also his desires be killed, he is betrayed by a party within. David was a holy person, but he was surprised by the sight of Bathsheba; for his freer use of permitted beds had kept the fire alive, which was apt to be put into a flame when so fair a beauty reflected through his eyes. But Joseph was a virgin, and kept under all his inclinations to looser thoughts; opportunity, and command, and violence, and beauty, did make no breach upon his spirit.

7. He that is in the first state of pilgrimage does not mutiny against his superiors, nor publish their faults, nor envy their dignities; but he that is dead to the world sees no fault that they have, and when he hears an objection, he buries it in an excuse, and rejoices in the dignity of their persons. Every degree of mortification endures reproof without murmur; but he that is quite dead to the world and to his own will feels no regret against it, and hath no secret thoughts of trouble and unwillingness to the suffering, save only that he is sorry he deserved it. "For so a dead body resists not your violence, changes not the posture you placed it in, strikes not his striker, is not moved by your words, nor provoked by your scorn, nor is troubled when you shrink with horror at the sight of it; only it will hold the head downward in all its situations, unless it be hindered by violence:" and a more mortified spirit is such; without indignation against scorn, without revenge against injuries, without murmuring at low offices, not impatient in troubles, indifferent in

all accidents, neither transported with joy nor depressed with sorrow, and is humble in all his thoughts. And thus "he that is dead (saith the apostle) is justified from sins." And this is properly a "state of life," in which by the grace of Jesus, we are restored to a condition of order and interior beauty in our faculties, our actions are made moderate and human, our spirits are even, and our understandings undisturbed.

8. For passions of the sensitive soul are like an exhalation, hot and dry, borne up from the earth upon the wings of a cloud, and detained by violence out of its place, causing thunders, and making eruptions into lightning and sudden fires. There is a tempest in the soul of a passionate man; and though every wind does not shake the earth, nor rend the trees up by the roots, yet we call it violent and ill weather, if it only makes a noise and is harmless. And it is an inordination in the spirit of a man, when his passions are tumultuous and mighty; though they do not determine directly upon a sin, they discompose his peace, and disturb his spirit, and make it like troubled waters, in which no man can see his own figure and just proportions, and therefore by being less a man cannot be so much a Christian, in the midst of so great indispositions. For although the cause may hallow the passion, (and if a man be very angry for God's cause, it is zeal, not fury) yet the cause cannot secure the person from violence, transportation, and inconvenience. When Elisha was consulted by three kings concerning the success of their present expedition, he grew so angry against idolatrous Joram, and was carried on to so great degrees of disturbance, that when, for Jehoshaphat's sake, he was content to inquire of the Lord, he called for a minstrel, who by his harmony might recompose his disunited and troubled spirit, that so he might be apter for divination. And sometimes this zeal goes besides the intention

of the man, and beyond the degrees of prudent or lawful, and engages in a sin, though at first it was zeal for religion. For it so happened in Moses, "at the waters of Massah and Meribah he spake foolishly;" and yet it was when he was zealous for God, and extremely careful of the people's interest. For his passion, he was hindered from entering into the land of promise. And we also, if we be not moderate and well-tempered, even in our passions for God, may, like Moses, break the tables of the law, and throw them out of our hands with zeal to have them preserved; for passion violently snatches at the conclusion, but is inconsiderate and incurious concerning the premises. The sum and purpose of this discourse, is, that saying of our blessed Saviour, "He that will be my disciple must deny himself;" that is, not only desires that are sinful, but desires that are "his own," pursuances of his "own affections," and violent motions, though to things not evil or in themselves contagious.

9. Thirdly, And yet there is a degree of mortification of spirit beyond this: for the condition of our security may require, that we not only deny to act our temptations, or to please our natural desires, but also to seek opportunities of doing displeasure to our affections, and violence to our inclinations; and not only to be indifferent, but to chose a contradiction and a denial to our strongest appetites; to rejoice in a trouble: and this was the spirit of St. Paul, "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations;" and, "We glory in it." Which joy consists not in any sensitive pleasure any man can take in afflictions and adverse accidents, but in a despising the present inconveniences, and looking through the cloud to those great felicities, and graces, and consignations to glory, which are the effects of the cross: "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed;" that was the incentive of St.

Paul's joy. And therefore as it may consist with any degree of mortification, to pray for the taking away of the cross, upon condition it may consist with God's glory and our ghostly profit; so it is properly an act of this virtue to pray for the cross, or to meet it, if we understand it may be for the interest of the spirit. And thus St. Basil prayed to God to remove his violent pains of head-ache: but when God heard him, and took away his pain, and lust came in the place of it, he prayed to God to restore him his head-ache again; that cross was gain and joy, when the removal of it was so full of danger and temptation. And this the masters of spiritual life call "being crucified with Christ;" because as Christ chose the death, and desired it by the appetites of the spirit, though his flesh smarted under it, and groaned and died with the burthen; so do all that are thus mortified, they place misfortunes and sadnesses amongst things eligible, and set them before the eyes of their desire, although the flesh and the desires of sense are factious and bold against such sufferings.

10. Of these three degrees of interior or spiritual mortification, the first is *duty*, the second is *counsel*, and the third is *perfection*. We sin if we have not the first; we are in danger without the second; but without the third we cannot "be perfect as our heavenly Father is," but shall have more of human infirmities to be ashamed of, than can be excused by the accrescences and condition of our nature. The first is only of absolute necessity; the second is prudent, and of greatest convenience; but the third is excellent and perfect. And it was the consideration of a wise man, that the saints in heaven, who understand the excellent glories and vast differences of state and capacities amongst beatified persons, although they have no envy nor sorrows, yet if they were upon earth with the same notion and apprehensions they have in heaven, would not

for all the world lose any degree of glory, but mortify to the greatest eminency, that their glory may be a derivation of the greatest ray of light; every degree being of compensation glorious, and disproportionably beyond the inconsiderably beyond the inconsiderable troubles of the greatest self-denial. God's purpose is, that we abstain from sin; there is no more in the commandment; and therefore we must deny ourselves, so as not to admit a sin, under pain of a certain and eternal curse: but the other degrees of mortification are by accident so many degrees of virtue, not being enjoined or counselled for themselves, but for the preventing of crimes, and for securities of good life; and therefore are parts and offices of Christian prudence, which whosoever shall positively reject, is neither much in love with virtue, nor careful of his own safety.

11. Secondly, But mortification hath also some designs upon the body. For the body is the shop and forge of the soul, in which all her designs which are transient upon external objects are framed: and it is a good servant, as long as it is kept in obedience and under discipline; but "he that breeds his servant delicately" will find him contumacious and troublesome, bold and confident as "his son:" and therefore St. Paul's practice, (as himself gives account of it) was, "to keep his body under, and bring it into subjection, lest he should become a castaway;" for the desires of the body are, in the same things in which themselves are satisfied, so many injuries to the soul, because upon every one of the appetites a restraint is made, and a law placed for sentinel, that if we transgress the bounds fixed by the divine commandment, it becomes a sin; now it is hard for us to keep them within compass, because they are little more than agents merely natural, and therefore cannot interrupt their act, but covet and desire as much as they can without suspension or coercion, except

what comes from without, which is therefore the more troublesome, because all such restraints are against nature, and without sensual pleasure. And therefore this is that that St. Paul said, "When we were in the flesh, the passions of sin which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." For these pleasures of the body draw us as loadstones draw iron, not for love, but for prey and nutriment; it feeds upon the iron, as the bodily pleasures upon the life of the spirit, which is lessened and impaired according as the gusts of the flesh grow high and sapid.

12. He that feeds a lion must obey him, unless he make his den to be his prison. Our lusts are as wild and cruel beasts, and, unless they feel the load of fetters and of laws, will grow unruly and troublesome, and increase upon us, as we give them food and satisfaction. He that is used to drink high wines, is sick if he hath not his proportion, to what degree soever his custom hath brought his appetite; and to some men temperance becomes certain death, because the inordination of their desires hath introduced a custom, and custom hath increased those appetites, and made them almost natural in their degree; but he that hath been used to hard diet and the pure stream, his refreshments are much within the limits of temperance, and his desires as moderate as his diet. And there is reason that the appetite should be harder to be restrained, when it hath not been accustomed to be denied, but satisfied in its freer solicitations. When a fontinel is once opened, all the symbolical humours run thither, and issue out, and it is not to be stopped without danger, unless the humour be purged or diverted. So is the satisfaction of an impure desire, it opens the issue, and makes way for the emanation of all impurity, and, unless the desire be mortified, will not be stopped by purposes and easy vows.

13. Since therefore the body is the instrument of sins, the fuel and the incentive, our

mortification must reach thither also, at least in some degrees, or it will be too small purpose to think of mortifying our spirit in some instances of temptation. In vain does that man think to keep his honour and chastity, that invites his lust to an activeness by soft beds and high diet, and idleness and opportunity. Make the soul's instrument unapt, and half the work is done. And this is true in all instances of carnality or natural desires, whose scene lies in the lower region of passions, and are acted by the body ; but the operation of the cure must be in proportion to the design ; as the mortification of the spirit is in several degrees, so the mortification of the body also hath its several parts of prudence, injunction, and necessity. For the prescribing all sorts of mortifications, indefinitely and indiscriminately to all persons, without separation of their ends and distinct capacities, is a snare to men's consciences, makes religion impertinently troublesome ; occasions some men to glory in corporal austerity, as if of itself it were an act of piety, and a distinction of the man from the more imperfect persons of the world, and is all the way unreasonable and artificial.

14. First, therefore such whose engagements in the world, or capacities of person, confine them to the lowest and first step of mortification, those who fight only for life and liberty, not for privileges and honour ; that are in perpetual contestation and close fightings with sin, it is necessary that their body also be mortified in such a degree, that their desires transport them not beyond the permissions of divine and human laws ; let such men be strict in the rules of temperance and sobriety, be chaste within the laws of marriage, cherish their body to preserve their health, and their health to serve God and to do their offices. To these persons the best instruments of discipline are the strict laws of temperance ; denying all transgressions of the appetite boiling over its margin and

proper limit, assiduous prayer and observation of the public laws of fasting, which are framed so moderate and even, as to be proportionable to the common manner of living of persons secular and incumbered. For though many persons of common employments and even manner of living, have, in the midst of worldly avocations, undertaken austerities very rude and rigorous, yet it was in order to a higher mortification of spirit ; and it is also necessary they should, if either naturally, or habitually, or easily, they suffer violent transportation of passions ; for since occasions of anger and disturbance in the world frequently occur, if such passions be not restrained by greater violence than is competent to the ordinary offices of a moderate piety, the cure is weaker than the humour, and so leaves the work imperfect.

15. Secondly, But this is coincident to the second degree of mortification : for if either out of desire of a farther step towards perfection, or out of the necessities of nature or evil customs, it be necessary also to subdue our passions as well as the direct invitations to sin, in both these cases the body must suffer more austerities, even such as directly are contrary to every passionate disturbance, though it be not ever sinful in the instance. All mortifiers must abstain from every thing that is unlawful ; but these, that they may abstain from things unlawful, must also deny to themselves satisfaction in things lawful and pleasant ; and this in a just proportion to the end, the subduing the passions, lest their liberty and boldness become licentious. And we shall easier deny their importunity to sin, when we will not please them in those things in which we may ; such in which the fear of God, and the danger of our souls, and the convictions of reason and religion do not immediately co-operate. And this was the practice of David, when he had thirsted for the water of Bethlehem, and some of his worthies ventured their lives and brought it, "he

refused to drink it, but poured it upon the ground unto the Lord, that is, it became a drink offering unto the Lord; an acceptable oblation, in which he sacrificed his desires to God, denying himself the satisfaction of such a desire which was natural and innocent, save that it was something nice, delicate, and curious. Like this was the act of the fathers in the mountain Nitria, to one of whom a fair cluster of dried grapes being sent, he refused to taste them, lest he should be too sensual and much pleased, but sent them to another, and he to a third, and the same consideration transmitted the present through all their cells, till it came to the first man again; all of them not daring to content their appetite in a thing too much desired, lest the like importunity in the instance of a sin should prevail upon them. To such persons the best instruments of discipline are subtractions rather than imposition of austerities; let them be great haters of corporeal pleasures, eating, for necessity, diet spare and cheap, abridging and making short the opportunities of natural and permitted solaces, refusing exterior comforts, not choosing the most pleasant object, not suffering delight to be the end of eating, and therefore separating delight from it as much as prudently they may, not being too importunate with God to remove his gentler hand of paternal correction; but thus inuring ourselves to patient suffering, and indifferent acceptance of the cross that God lays upon us, at no hand living delicately, or curiously, or impatiently. And this was the condition of St. Paul, suffering with excellent temper all those persecutions and inconveniences which the enemies of religion loaded him withal; which he called bearing the marks of the Lord Jesus in his body, and carrying about in his body the dying, or mortification, of the Lord Jesus; it was in the matter of persecution, which because he bare patiently, and was accustomed to, and he accepted with indiffer-

ence and renunciation, they were the mortifications and the marks of Jesus; that is, a true conformity to the passion of Christ, and of great effect and interest for the preventing sins by the mortification of his natural desires.

16. Thirdly, But in the pale of the church there are and have been many tall cedars whose tops have reached to heaven; some there are that chose afflictions of the body, that by turning the bent and inclination of their affections into sensual displeasures, they may not only cut off all pretensions of temptation, but grow in spiritual graces, and perfections intellectual and beatified. To this purpose they served themselves with the instances of sackcloth, hard lodging, long fasts, pernoctation in prayers, renunciation of all secular possessions, great and expensive charity, bodily labours to great weariness and affliction, and many other prodigies of voluntary suffering, which Scripture and the ecclesiastical stories do frequently mention. St. Lewis, king of France, wore sackcloth every day, unless sickness hindered; and St. Zenobius as long as he was a bishop. And when Severus Sulpitius sent a sackcloth to St. Paulinus, bishop of Nola, he returned to him a letter of thanks, and discoursed piously concerning the use of corporeal austerities. And I need not instance, that it was so general, that this was by way of appropriation called "the garment of the church," because of the frequent use of such instruments of exterior mortification; and so it was in other instances. St. James neither ate flesh nor drank wine; St. Matthew lived upon acorns, seeds, and herbs; and, amongst the elder Christians, some rolled themselves naked in snows, some upon thorns, some on burning coals, some chewed bitter pills and masticated gums, and sipped frequently of horrid potions, and wore iron upon their skin and bolts upon their legs, and in witty torments excelled the cruelty of many of their persecutors, whose rage terminated quickly in death, and

had certainly less of torment than the tedious afflictions and rude penances of Simeon surnamed Stylites. But as all great examples have excellences above the ordinary devotions of good people, so have they some *danger* and much consideration.

17. First, therefore, I consider, that these bodily and voluntary self-afflictions can only be of use in carnal and natural temptations, of no use in spiritual; for ascetic diet, hard lodging, and severe discipline, cannot be directly operative upon the spirit, but only by mediation of the body, by abating its extravagances, by subtracting its maintenance, by lessening its temptations; these may help to preserve the soul chaste or temperate, because the scene of these sins lies in the body, and thence they have their maintenance, and from thence also may receive their abatements. But in actions which are less material, such as pride, and envy, and blasphemy, and impenitence, and all the kinds and degrees of malice, external mortifications do so little co-operate to their cure, that oftentimes they are their greatest inflamers and incentives, and are like cordials given to cure a cold fit of an ague, they do their work, but bring a hot fit in its place: and besides that, great mortifiers have been soonest assaulted by the spirit of pride, we find that great fasters are naturally angry and choleric. St. Hieron found it in himself, and Russinus felt some of the effects of it. And therefore this last part of corporeal mortification, and the choosing such afflictions by a voluntary imposition, is at no hand to be applied in all cases, but in cases of lust only and intemperance or natural impatience, or such crimes which dwell in the senses; and even then it also should be considered, whether or not rudeness to the body, applied for the obtaining patience, be not a direct temptation to impatience, a provoking of the spirit, and a running into that whither we pray that God would not suffer us to be led.

Possibly such austerities, if applied with great caution and wise circumstances, may be an exercise of patience, when the grace is by other means acquired; and he that finds them so, may use them, if he dares trust himself; but as they are dangerous *before* the grace is obtained, so when it is, they are not necessary. And still it may be inquired in the case of temptations to lust, whether any such austerities which can consist with health will do the work. So long as the body is in health, it will do its offices of nature; if it is not in health, it cannot do all offices of grace, nor many of our calling. And therefore although they may do some advantages to persons tempted with the lowest sins, yet they will not do it all, nor do it alone, nor are they safe to all dispositions; and where they are useful to these smaller and lower purposes, yet we must be careful to observe, that the mortification of the spirit to the greatest and most perfect purposes is to be set upon by means spiritual and of immediate efficacy: for they are the lowest operations of the soul which are moved and produced by actions corporeal: the soul may from those become lustful or chaste, cheerful or sad, timorous or confident; but yet even in these the soul receives but some dispositions thence, and more forward inclinations; but nothing from the body can be operative in the begetting or increase of charity, or the love of God, or devotion, or in mortifying spiritual and intellectual vices: and therefore, those greater perfections and heights of the soul, such as are designed in this highest degree of mortification, are not apt to be enkindled by corporeal austerities. And Nigrinus in Lucian, finds fault with those philosophers who thought virtue was to be purchased by cutting the skin with whips, binding the nerves, razing the body with iron: but he taught that virtue is to be placed in the mind by actions internal and immaterial, and that from thence remedies are to be derived against perturbations

and actions criminal. And this is determined by the apostle in fairest intimation, "Mortify therefore your earthly members;" and he instances in carnal crimes, "fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness," which are things may be something abated by corporeal mortifications: and that these are by distinct manner to be helped from other more spiritual vices, he adds, "But now therefore put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, and lying." To both these sorts of sins, mortification being the general remedy, particular applications are to be made, and it must be only spiritual, or also corporeal in proportion to the nature of the sins; he seems to distinguish the remedy by separation of the nature of the crimes, and possibly also by the differing words of mortify, applied to carnal sins, and put off, to crimes spiritual.

18. Secondly, but in the lesser degrees of mortification, in order to subduing of all passions of the sensitive appetite, and the consequent and symbolical sins, bodily austerities are of good use, if well understood and prudently undertaken. To which purpose I also consider, no acts of corporeal austerity or external religion are of themselves to be esteemed holy or acceptable to God; are nowhere precisely commanded; no instruments of union with Christ, no immediate parts of divine worship, and therefore to suffer corporeal austerities with thoughts determining upon the external action or imaginations of sanctity inherent in the action, is *against* the purity, the spirituality, and simplicity of the gospel. And this is the meaning of St. Paul, "It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them which have walked in them;" and, "The kingdom of God consists not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" and, "Bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profit-

able unto all things." Now, if external mortifications are not for themselves, then they are to receive their estimate as they *co-operate* to the end. Whatsoever is a prudent restraint of an extravagant passion, whatsoever is a direct denial of a sin, whatsoever makes provision for the spirit, or withdraws the fuel from the impure fires of carnality, that is an act of mortification; but those austerities which Baal's priests did use, or the Flagellantes, an ignorant faction that went up and down villages whipping themselves, or those which return periodically on a set day of discipline, and using rudenesses to the body by way of ceremony and solemnity, not directed against the actual incursion of a pungent lust, are not within the verge of the grace of mortification. For unless the temptation to a carnal sin be actually incumbent and pressing upon the soul, pains of infliction and smart do no benefit toward suppressing the habit or inclination; for such sharp disciplines are but short and transient troubles; and although they take away the present fancies of a temptation, yet unless it be rash and uncharitable, there is no effect remains upon the body, but that the temptation may speedily return. As is the danger, so must be the application of the remedy. Actual severities are not imprudently undertaken in case of imminent danger; but to cure an habitual lust, such corporeal mortifications are most reasonable whose effect is permanent, and which takes away whatsoever does minister more fuel, and puts a torch to the pile.

19. But this is altogether a discourse of Christian prudence, not of precise duty and religion; for if we do by *any* means provide for our indemnity and secure our innocence, all other exterior mortifications are not necessary, and they are convenient but as they facilitate or co-operate towards the end. And if this be well understood, it will concern us that they be used with prudence and caution, with purity of

intention, and without pride; for since they are nothing in themselves, but are hallowed and adopted into the family of religious actions, by participation of the end, the doing them not for themselves, takes off all complacency and fancy reflecting from an opinion of the external actions; guides and purifies the intention, and teaches us to be prudent in the managing of those austerities, which as they are in themselves afflictive, so have in them nothing that is eligible, if they be imprudent.

20. And now supposing these premises as our guide to choose and enter into the action, prudence must be called into the execution and discharge of it, and the manner of its managing. And for the prudential part, I shall first give the advice of Nigrinus in the discipline of the old philosophers; "He that will best institute and instruct men in the studies of virtue and true philosophy, must have regard to the mind, to the body, to the age, to the former education, and capacities or incapacities of the person;" to which all such circumstances may be added as are to be accounted for in all prudent estimations; such as national customs, dangers of scandal, the presence of other remedies, or disbanding of the inclination.

21. Secondly, It may also concern the prudence of this duty, not to neglect the smallest inadvertencies and minutes of lust or spiritual inconvenience, but to contradict them in their weakness and first beginnings. We see that great disturbances are wrought from the smallest occasions meeting with an impatient spirit, like great flames kindled from a little spark fallen into an heap of prepared nitre. St. Austin tells a story of a certain person "much vexed with flies in the region of his dwelling, and himself heightened the trouble by too violent and busy reflections upon the inconsiderableness of the instrument, and the greatness of the vexation alighting upon a peevish spirit. In this disposition he was visited by a Manichee, (an

heretic that denied God to be the maker of things visible;) he being busy to rub his infection upon the next thing he met, asked the impatient person whom he thought to be the maker of flies, he answered, 'I think the devil was; for they are instruments of great vexation and perpetual trouble.' What he rather fancied than believed, or expressed by anger rather than at all had entertained within, the Manichee confirmed by such arguments, to which his adversary was very apt to give consent, by reason of his impatience and peevishness. The Manichee having set his foot firm upon his first breach proceeded in his question, 'If the devil made flies, why not bees, who are but a little bigger, and have a sting too?' The consideration of the sting made him fit to think, that the little difference in bigness needed not a distinct and a greater efficient, especially since the same workman can make a great as well as a little vessel. The Manichee proceeded, 'If a bee, why not a locust? if a locust, then a lizard? if a lizard, then a bird? if a bird, then a lamb? and thence he made bold to proceed to a cow, to an elephant, to a man.' His adversary by this time being ensnared by granting so much, and now ashamed not to grant more, lest his first concessions should seem unreasonable and impious, confessed the devil to be the maker of all creatures visible." The use which is made of this story, is this caution, that the devil do not abuse us in *flies*, and provoke our spirits by trifles and impertinent accidents; for if we be unmortified in our smallest motions, it is not imaginable we should stand the blast of an impetuous accident and violent perturbation. Let us not therefore give our passions course in a small accident, because the instance is inconsiderable; for though it be, the consequence may be dangerous, and a wave may follow a wave, till the inundation be general and desperate. And, therefore, here it is intended for advice, that we be observant of the

accidents of our domestic affairs, and curious that every trifling inadvertency of a servant, or slight misbecoming action, or imprudent words, be not apprehended as instruments of vexation; for so many small occasions, if they be productive of many small disturbances, will produce an habitual churlishness and immortification of spirit.

22. Thirdly, let our greatest diligence and care be employed in mortifying our predominant passion; for if our care be so great as not to entertain the smallest, and our resolution so strong and holy as not to be subdued by the greatest and most passionate desires, the Spirit hath done all its work, secures the future, and sanctifies the present, and nothing is wanting but perseverance in the same prudence and religion. And this is typically commanded in the precept of God to Moses and Aaron in the matter of Peor; "Vex the Midianites, because they vexed you, and made you sin by their daughters;" and Phinehas did so, he killed a prince of the house of Simeon, and a princess of Midian, and God confirmed the priesthood to him for ever; meaning, that we shall for ever be admitted to a nearer relation to God, if we sacrifice to God our dearest lust. And this is not so properly an act, as the end of mortification. Therefore it concerns the prudence of the duty, that all the efficacy and violence of it be employed against the strongest, and there where is the most dangerous hostility.

23. Fourthly, but if we mean to be masters of the field, and put our victory past dispute, let us mortify our morosity and natural aversions, reducing them to an indifferency, having in our wills no partialities, in our spirits no faction of persons or nations, being prepared to love all men, and to endure all things, and to undertake all employments which are duty or counsel in all circumstances and disadvantages. For the excellency of evangelical sanctity surmounts all antipathies, as a vessel climbs up

and rides upon a wave; the wolf and the lamb shall lie down together, and a child shall play and put his fingers in the cavern of an asp. Nations whose interests are most contradictory must be knit by the confederations of a mortified and a Christian spirit, and single persons must triumph over the difficulties of an indisposed nature, or else their own will is unmortified, and nature is stronger than can well consist with the dominion and absolute empire of grace. To this I reduce such peevish and unhandsome nicenesses in matters of religion, that are unsatisfied unless they have all exterior circumstances trimmed up and made pompous for their religious offices; such who cannot pray without a convenient room, and their devotion is made active only by a well built chapel, and they cannot sing lauds without church music, and too much *light* dissolves their intention, and too much *dark* promotes their melancholy; and because these and the like exterior ministries are good advantages, therefore without them they can do nothing, which certainly is a great intimation and likeness to immortification. Our will should be like the candle of the eye, without all colour in itself, that it may entertain the species of all colours from without; and when we lust after mandrakes and deliciousness of exterior ministries, we many times are brought to betray our own interest, and prostitute our dearest affections to more noble and stranger desires. Let us love all natures, and serve all persons, and pray in all places, and fast without opportunities, and do alms above our power, and set ourselves heartily on work, to neglect and frustrate those lower temptations of the devil, who will frequently enough make our religion inopportune if we then will make it unfrequent: and will present us with objects and flies enough to disquiet our persons, if our natures be petulant, peevish, curious, and unmortified.

24. It is a great mercy of God to have an

affable, sweet, and well disposed nature, and it does half the work of mortification for us ; we have the less trouble to subdue our passions and destroy our lusts. But, then, as those whose natures are morose, choleric, peevish and lustful, have greater difficulty, so is their virtue of greater excellence, and returned with a more ample reward ; but it is in all men's natures, as with them who gathered manna, " They that gathered little had no lack, and they that gathered much had nothing over ; " they who are of ill natures shall lack no assistance of God's grace to work their cure, though their flesh be longer healing ; and they who are sweetly tempered, being naturally meek and modest, chaste or temperate, will find work enough to contest against their temptations from without, though from within possibly they may have fewer. Yet there are greater degrees of virtue and heroical excellences, and great rewards to which God hath designed them by so fair dispositions, and it will concern all their industry to mortify their spirit, which though it be malleable and more ductile, yet it is as bare and naked of imagery as the rudest and most iron nature ; so that mortification will be every man's duty ; no nature, nor piety, nor wisdom, nor perfection, but will need it, either to subdue a lust, or a passion ; to cut off an occasion, or to resist a temptation ; to persevere, or to go on ; to secure our present estate, or to proceed towards perfection. But all men do not think so.

25. For there are some who have great peace, no fightings within, no troubles without, no disputes or contradictions in their spirit ; but these men have the peace of tributaries or a conquered people, the gates of their city stand open day and night, that all carriages may enter without disputing the pass ; the flesh and the spirit dispute not, because the spirit is there in pupilage or in bonds, and the flesh rides in triumph, with the tyranny and pride and

impotency of a female tyrant. For in the sense of religion, we all are warriors or slaves ; either ourselves are stark dead in trespasses and sins, or we need to stand perpetually upon our guards in continual observation, and in contestation against our lusts and our passions ; so long denying and contradicting our own wills, till we will and choose to do things against our wills, having an eye always to those infinite satisfactions which shall glorify our wills and all our faculties, when we arrive to that state in which there shall be no more contradiction, but only that our mortal shall put on immortality.

26. But as some have a vain and dangerous peace, so others double their trouble by too nice and impertinent scruples, thinking that every temptation is a degree of immortification. As long as we live we shall have to do with enemies ; but as this life is ever a state of imperfection, so the very design and purpose of mortification is not to take away temptations, but to overcome them ; it endeavours to facilitate the work, and secure our condition by removing all occasions it can ; but the opportunity of a crime, and the solicitation to a sin, is no fault of ours, unless it be of our procuring, or finds entertainment when it comes unsent for. To suffer a temptation is a misery, but if we then set upon the mortification of it, it is an occasion of virtue ; and never is criminal, unless we give consent. But then also it should be considered, that it is not good offering ourselves to fire ordeal, to confirm our innocence ; nor prudent to enter into battle without need, and to shew our valour ; nor safe to procure a temptation, that we may have the reward of mortification of it. For mortification of the spirit is not commanded as a duty finally resting in itself, or immediately landing upon God's glory ; such are acts of charity and devotion, chastity and justice ; but it is the great instrument of humility and all other graces, and therefore is to be undertaken to destroy a sin, and to secure

a virtuous habit. And besides that, to call on a danger, is to tempt God, and to invite the devil, (and no man is sure of a victory :) it is also great imprudence to create a need, that we may take it away again ; to drink poison, to make experiment of the antidote ; and at the best it is but a running back to come just to the same place again ; for he that is not tempted does not sin ; but he that invites a temptation, that he might overcome it, or provokes a passion, that he may allay it, is then but in the same condition, after all his pains and his danger. He was not sure he should come so far.

THE PRAYER.

O dearest God, who hast framed man of soul and body, and fitted him with faculties and proportionable instruments to serve thee according to all our capacities, let thy Holy Spirit rule and sanctify every power and mem-

ber both of soul and body, that they may keep that beautiful order which in our creation thou didst intend, and to which thou dost restore thy people in the renovations of grace : that our affections may be guided by our reason, our understanding may be enlightened with thy word, and then may guide and persuade our will ; that we suffer no violent transportation of passions, nor be overcome by a temptation, nor consent to the impure solicitations of lust ; that sin may not reign in our mortal bodies, but that both bodies and souls may be conformable to the sufferings of the holy Jesus ; that in our body we may bear the marks and dying of our Lord, and in our spirits we may be humble and mortified, and like him in all his imitable perfections ; that we may die to sin and live to righteousness, and after our suffering together with him in this world, we may reign together with him hereafter ; to whom in the unity of the most mysterious trinity be all glory, and dominion, and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

SECTION IX.

OF JESUS BEING BAPTIZED, AND GOING INTO THE WILDERNESS TO BE TEMPTED.

1. Now that the full time was come, Jesus took leave of his mother and his trade, to begin his Father's work and the office prophetic, in order to the redemption of the world; and when "John was baptizing in Jordan Jesus came to John to be baptized of him." The Baptist had never seen his face, because they had been from their infancy driven to several places, designed to several employments, and never met till now. But immediately the Holy Ghost inspired St. John with a discerning and knowing spirit, and at his first arrival he knew him, and did him worship. And when Jesus desired to be baptized, John forbade him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" For the baptism of John, although it was not a direct instrument of the spirit for the collation of grace, neither find we it administered in any form of words, not so much as in the name of Christ to come, (as many dream) because even after John had baptized, the Pharisees still doubted if he were the Messiah, which they would not, if in his form of ministration he had published Christ to come after him; and also because it had not been proper for Christ himself to have received that baptism whose form had specified himself to come hereafter; neither could it consist with the revelation which John had, and the confession which he made, to baptize in the name of Christ to come, whom the Spirit marked out to him to be come already, (and himself pointed at him with his finger) yet it was a ceremonious consignation of the doctrine

of repentance, which was one great part of the covenant evangelical, and was a divine institution, the susception of it was in order to the "fulfilling all righteousness," it was a sign of humility, the persons baptized confessed their sins, it was a sacramental disposing to the baptism and faith of Christ; but therefore John wondered why the Messiah, "the Lamb of God," pure and without spot, who needed not the abstersions of repentance or the washings baptism, should demand it, and of him a sinner and his servant. And in the Hebrew gospel of St. Matthew which the Nazarenes used at Beræa (as St. Hierom reports) these words are added; ["the mother of the Lord and his brethren said unto him, John the Baptist baptizeth to the remission of sins, let us go and be baptized of him. He said to them, What have I sinned, that I should go and be baptized of him?"] And this part of the story is also told by Justin Martyr. But Jesus wanted not a proposition, to consign by his baptism, proportionable enough to the analogy of its institution; for as others professed their *return* towards innocence, so he avowed his *perseverance* in it: and though he was never called in scripture, a sinner, yet he was made sin for us; that is, he did undergo the shame and the punishment; and therefore it was proper enough for him to perform the sacrament of sinners.

2. But the Holy Jesus who came (as himself in answer to the Baptist's question professed) "to fulfil all righteousness," would receive that rite which his Father had insti-

tuted in order to the manifestation of his Son. For although the Baptist had a glimpse of him by the first irradiations of the Spirit, yet John professed, that he therefore came "baptizing with water," that "Jesus might be manifested to Israel;" and it was also a sign given to the Baptist himself, that "on whomsoever he saw the Spirit descending and remaining," he is the person "that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." And God chose to actuate the sign at the waters of Jordan, in great and religious assemblies convened there at John's baptism; and therefore Jesus came to be baptized, and by this baptism became known to John, who as before he gave to him an unqualified testimony, so now he pointed out the person in his sermons and discourses, and by calling him "the Lamb of God" prophesied of his passion, and preached him to be the world's Redeemer, and the sacrifice for mankind. He was now manifest to Israel, he confirmed the baptism of John, he sanctified the water to become sacramental and ministerial in the remission of sins, he by a real event declared, that to them who should rightly be baptized the kingdom of heaven should certainly be opened, he inserted himself by that ceremony into the society and participation of holy people, of which communion himself was head and prince; and he did, in a symbol, purify human nature, whose stains and guilt he had undertaken.

3. As soon as John had performed his ministry, and "Jesus was baptized, he prayed, and the heavens were opened," and the air clarified by a new and glorious light, "and the Holy Ghost in the manner of a dove alighted upon" his sacred head, and God the Father gave "a voice from heaven, saying, 'Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" This was the inauguration and proclamation of the Messiah, when he began to be the great prophet of the new covenant. And this was the greatest meeting that ever

was upon earth, where the whole cabinet of the mysterious Trinity was opened and shewn, as much as the capacities of our present imperfections will permit; the second person in the veil of humanity, the third in the shape or with the motion of a dove: but the first kept his primitive state, and, as to the Israelites, he gave notice by the way of caution, "Ye saw no shape, but ye heard a voice," so now also God the Father gave testimony to his Holy Son, and appeared only in a voice without any visible representment.

4. When the rite and the solemnity were over, "Christ ascended up out of the waters," and left so much virtue behind him, that, as Gregorius Turonensis reports, the creek of the river where his holy body had been baptized was indued with a healing quality, and a power of curing lepers that bathed themselves in those waters, in the faith and with invocation of the holy name of Jesus. But the manifestation of this power was not till afterwards, for as yet Jesus did no miracles.

5. As soon as ever the Saviour of the world was baptized, and had opened the heavens, which yet never had been opened to man, and was declared the Son of God, "Jesus was by the Spirit driven into the wilderness," not by an unnatural violence, but by the efficacies of inspiration, and a supernatural inclination and activity of resolution; for it was the Holy Spirit that bare him thither; he "was led by the good Spirit to be tempted by the evil:" whither also he was pleased to retire, to make demonstration that even in an active life, such as he was designed to and intended, some recesses and temporary dismissions of the world are most expedient, for such persons especially whose office is prophetic, and for institution of others, that by such privacies in prayer and contemplation they may be better enabled to teach others, when they have in such retirements conversed with God.

6. In the desert, which was four miles from the place of his baptism, and about twenty miles from Jerusalem, as the common computations are, he did abide "forty days and forty nights," where he was perpetually disturbed and assaulted with evil spirits, in the midst of wild beasts, in a continual fast, without eating bread or drinking water; "and the angels ministered to him," being messengers of comfort and sustentation sent from his Father for the support and service of his humanity, and employed in resisting and discountenancing the assaults and temporal hostilities of the spirits of darkness.

7. Whether the devils appeared in any horrid and affrighting shapes is not certain; but it is more likely, to a person of so great sanctity and high designation they would appear more angelical and immaterial, in representations intellectual, in words and *ideas*, temptations and enticements, because Jesus was not a person of those low weaknesses to be affrighted or troubled with an ugly phantasm, which can do nothing but abuse the weak and imperfect conceptions of persons nothing extraordinary. And this was the way which Satan, or the prince of the devils, took, whose temptations were reserved for the last assault, and the great day of trial; for at the expiration of his forty days, Jesus being hungry, the tempter invited him only to eat bread of his own providing, which might refresh his humanity and prove his divinity, hoping that his hunger, and the desire of convincing the devil, might tempt him to eat before the time appointed. But Jesus answered, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God;" meaning, that in every word of God, whether the commandment be general or special, a promise is either expressed or implied of the supply of all provisions necessary for him that is doing the work of God; and that was the present case of

Jesus, who was then doing his Father's work, and promoting our interest, and therefore was sure to be provided for; and therefore so are we.

8. The devil, having failed in this assault, tries him again, requiring but a demonstration of his being the Son of God. He "sets him upon the battlement of the temple," and invites Him to "throw himself down," upon a pretence that God "would send his angels" to keep his Son; and quotes scripture for it. But Jesus understood it well; and though he was secured of God's protection, yet he would not tempt God, nor solicit his providence to a dereliction, by tempting him to an unnecessary conservation. This assault was silly and weak. But at last he unites all his power of stratagem, and places the Holy Jesus "upon an exceeding high mountain," and by an angelical power draws into one centre species and *ideas* from all the kingdoms and glories of the world, and makes an admirable map of beauties, and represents it to the eyes of Jesus, saying, that all that was put into his power to give, and he "would give it him, if he would fall down and worship him." But then the Holy Lamb was angry as a provoked lion, and commanded him away, when his temptations were violent, and his demands impudent and blasphemous. "Then the devil leaveth him, and the angels came and ministered unto him," bringing such things as his necessities required, after he had by a forty days' fast done penance for our sins, and consigned to his church the doctrine and discipline of fasting in order to a contemplative life, and the resisting and overcoming all the temptations and allurements of the devil, and all our ghostly enemies.

Considerations upon the Baptizing, Fasting, and Temptation of the Holy Jesus by the Devil.

1. When the day did break, and the Baptist was busy in his offices, the sun of righteousness soon entered upon our hemisphere; and after he had lived a life of darkness and silence for thirty years together, yet now that he came to do the greatest work in the world, and to minister in the most honourable embassy, he would do nothing of singularity, but "fulfil all righteousness," and satisfy all commands, and join in the common rites and sacraments, which all people, innocent or penitent, did undergo either as deleteries of sin or instruments of grace. For so he would needs be baptized by his servant; and though he was of purity sufficient to do it, and did actually by his baptism purify the purifier, and sanctify that and all other streams to a holy ministry and effect, yet he went in, bowing his head like a sinner, unclothing himself like an imperfect person, and craving to be washed, as if he had been crusted with an impure leprosy: thereby teaching us to submit ourselves to all those rites which He would institute; and although some of them be, like the baptism of John, joined with confession of sins and publication of our infirmities, yet it were better for us to lay by our loads and wash our ulcers, than by concealing them, out of vainer desires of impertinent reputation, to cover our disease till we are heart-sick and die. But when so holy a person does all the pious ministeries of the more imperfect, it is a demonstration to us, that a life common and ordinary, without affectation or singularity, is the most prudent and safe. Every great change, every violence of fortune, all eminences and unevennesses whatsoever, whether of person, or accident, or cir-

cumstance, puts us to a new trouble, requires a distinct care, creates new dangers, presents more temptations, marks us out the object of envy, makes our standing more insecure, and our fall more contemptible and ridiculous. But an even life spent with as much rigour of duty to God as ought to be, yet in the same manner of devotions, in the susception of ordinary offices, in bearing public burthens, frequenting public assemblies, performing offices of civility, receiving all the rites of religion, complying with national customs and hereditary solemnities of a people, in nothing disquieting public peace, or disrelishing the great instruments of an innocent communion, or dissolving the circumstantial ligaments of charity, or breaking laws, and the great relations and necessities of the whole world, out of fancy or singularity, is the best way to live holily, and safely, and happily; safer from sin and envy, and more removed from trouble and temptation.

2. When Jesus came to John to be baptized, John, out of humility and modesty, refused him: but when Jesus by reduplication of his desire, fortifying it with a command, made it, in the Baptist, to become a duty; then he obeyed. And so also did the primitive clerks refuse to do offices of great dignity and highest ministry, looking through the honour upon the danger: and, passing by the dignity, they considered the charge of the cure, and knew that the eminency of the office was in all senses insecure to the person, till by command and peremptory injunction of their superiors, it was put past a dispute, and became necessary, and that either they must perish instantly in the ruins and precipices of disobedience, or put it to the hazard and a fair venture for a brighter crown or a bigger damnation. I wish also this care were entailed and did descend upon all ages of the church; for the ambitious seeking of dignities and prelacies ecclesiastical is grown the pest of the church, and corrupts the *salt*

itself, and extinguishes the lights, and gives too apparent evidences to the world, that neither the end is pure, nor the intention sanctified, nor the person innocent, but the purpose ambitious or covetous, and the person vicious; and the very entrance into church offices is with an impure torch, and a foul hand, or a heart empty of the affections of religion, or thoughts of doing God's work. I do not think the present age is to be treated with, concerning denying to accept rich prelacies and pompous dignities; but it were but reasonable that the main intention and intellectual design, should be to appreciate and esteem the office and employment to be of greatest consideration. It is lawful to desire a bishopric, neither can the unwillingness to accept it, be, in a prudent account, adjudged the *aptest* disposition to receive it, (especially if done in ceremony, just in the instant of their entertainment of it, and possibly after a long ambition; but yet it were well if we remember that such desires must be sanctified with holy care and diligence in the office; for the honey is guarded with thousands of little sharp stings and dangers, and it will be a sad account, if we be called to audit for the crimes of our diocese after our own tallies are made even; and he that believes his own load to be big enough, and trembles at the apprehension of the horrors of doomsday, is not very wise if he takes up those burthens which he sees have crushed their bearers, and press his own shoulders till the bones crack, only because the bundles are wrapped in *white* linc and bound with *silken* cords. He that desires the office of a bishop, desires a good work, saith St. Paul; and therefore we must not look on it for the fair-spreading sails and the beauteous streamers, which the favour of princes hath put to it, to make it sail fairer and more secure against the dangers of secular discomforts; but upon the *burthen* it bears. Pastorate is a good work, and a good work well done is very honour-

able, and shall be rewarded; but he that considers the infinite dangers of miscarrying, and that the loss of the ship will be imputed to the pilot, may think it many times the safest course to put God or his superiors to the charge of a command, before he undertakes such great ministries. And he that enters in by the force of authority, as he himself receives a testimony of his worth and aptness to the employment, so he gives the world another, that his search for it was not criminal, nor his person immodest; and, by his weighty apprehension of his dangers, he will consider his work, and obtain a grace to do it diligently, and to be accepted graciously. And this was the modesty and prudence of the Baptist.

3. When Jesus was baptized, he prayed, and the heavens were opened. External rites of divine institution receive benediction and energy from above, but it is by the mediation of prayer; for there is nothing ritual, but it is also joined with something moral, and required on our part in all persons capable of the use of reason, that we may understand that the blessings of religion are *works* and *graces* too; God, therefore, requiring us to do something, not that we may glory in it, but that we may estimate the grace, and go to God for it in the means of his own hallowing. Naaman had been stupid, if, when the prophet bade him wash seven times in Jordan for his cure, he had not confessed the cure to be wrought by the God of Israel and the ministry of his prophet, but had made himself the author, because of his obedience to the enjoined condition; and it is but a weak fancy to derogate from God's grace, and the glory and the freedom of it, because he bids us wash before we are cleansed, and pray when we are washed, and commands us to ask before we shall receive. But this also is true from this instance, that the external rite of sacrament is so instrumental in a spiritual grace, that it *never* does it but with the conjunction of some-

thing moral; and this truth is of so great persuasion in the Greek church, that the mystery of consecration in the venerable Eucharist, is amongst them attributed not to any mystical words and secret operations of syllables, but to the efficacy of the prayers of the church, in the just imitation of the whole action and the rite of institution. And the purpose of it is, that we might secure the excellency and holiness of such predispositions and concomitant graces, which are necessary to the worthy and effectual susception of the external rites of Christianity.

4. After the holy Jesus was baptized and had prayed, the heavens opened, the Holy Ghost descended, and a voice from heaven proclaimed him to be the Son of God, and one in whom the Father was well pleased; and the same ointment that was cast upon the head of our high priest, went unto his beard, and thence fell to the borders of his garment; for as Christ our head felt these effects in manifestation, so the church believes God does to her and to her meanest children, in the reception of the holy rite of baptism in right, apt, and holy dispositions. For the heavens open too upon us, and the Holy Ghost descends to sanctify the waters, and to hallow the catechumen, and to pardon the past and repented sins, and to consign him to the inheritance of sons, and to put on his military girdle, and give him the sacrament and oath of fidelity; for all this is understood to be meant by those frequent expressions of Scripture, calling baptism the laver of regeneration, illumination, a washing away the filth of the flesh, and the answer of a good conscience, a being buried with Christ, and many others of the like purpose and signification. But we may also learn hence, sacredly to esteem the rites of religion, which He first sanctified by his own personal susception, and then made necessary by his own institution and command, and God hath made to be conveyances of blessing and ministries of the holy Spirit.

5. "The Holy Ghost descended upon Jesus in the manner or visible representment of a dove:" either in similitude of figure which he was pleased to assume, as the church more generally hath believed; or at least he did "descend like a dove," and in his robe of fire hovered over the Baptist's head, and then "sat upon him," as the dove uses to sit upon the house of her dwelling; whose properties of nature are pretty and modest hieroglyphics of the duty of spiritual persons, which are thus observed in both philosophies. The dove sings not, but mourns: it hath no gall, strikes not with its bill, hath no crooked talons, and forgets its young ones soonest of any inhabitants of the air. And the effects of the Holy Spirit are symbolical in all the sons of sanctification: for the voice of the church is sad in those accents which express her own condition: but as the dove is not so sad in her breast, as in her note, so neither is the interior condition of the church wretched and miserable, but indeed her song is most of it elegy within her own walls, and her condition looks sad, and her joys are not pleasures in the public estimate; but they that afflict her think her miserable, because they know not the sweetnesses of a holy peace and serenity which supports her spirit, and smooths the heart under a rugged brow, making the soul festival under the noise of a threne and sadder groanings. But the sons of consolation are also taught their duty by this apparition: for upon whomsoever the Spirit descends, he teaches him to be meek and charitable, neither offending by the violence of hands, or looser language. For the dove is inoffensive in beak and foot, and feels no disturbance and violence of passions when its dearest interests are destroyed; that we also may be of an even spirit in the saddest accidents, which usually discompose our peace: and, however such synbolical intimations receive their efficacy from the fancy of the contriver, yet here, whether this apparition did intend any

such moral representment or no, it is certain that wherever the Holy Spirit does dwell, there also peace and sanctity, meekness, and charity, a mortified will and an active dereliction of our desires do inhabit. But besides this hieroglyphical representation, this dove, like that which Noah sent out from the ark, did aptly signify the world to be renewed, and all to be turned to a new creation, and God hath made a new covenant with us, that, unless we provoke him, he will never destroy us any more.

6. No sooner had the voice of God pronounced Jesus to be the "well-beloved Son of God," but the devil thought it of great concernment to attempt him with all his malice and his art; and that is the condition of all those whom God's grace hath separated from the common expectations and societies of the world: and therefore the son of Sirach gave good advice, "My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation;" for not only the spirits of darkness are exasperated at the declension of their own kingdom, but also the nature and constitution of virtues and eminent graces, which holy persons exercise in their lives, is such as to be easily assailable by their contraries, apt to be lessened by time, to be interrupted by weariness, to grow flat and insipid by tediousness of labour, to be omitted and grow unfrequent by the impertinent diversions of society and secular occasions; so that to rescind the ligaments of vice made firm by nature and evil habits, to acquire every new degree of virtue, to continue the holy fires of zeal in their just proportion, to overcome the devil, and to reject the invitations of the world, and the softer embraces of the flesh, which is the proper employment of the sons of God, is a perpetual difficulty, and every possibility of prevaricating the strictnesses of a duty is a temptation, and an insecurity to them who have begun to serve God in hard battles.

7. "The Holy Spirit did drive Jesus into

the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." And though we are bound to pray instantly that we fall into no temptation, yet, if by divine permission or by an inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we be engaged in an action or course of life that is full of temptation and empty of comfort, let us apprehend it as an issue of divine providence, as an occasion of the rewards of diligence and patience, as an instrument of virtue, as a designation of that way in which we must glorify God; but no argument of disfavour, since our dearest Lord, the most Holy Jesus, who could have driven the devil away by the breath of his mouth, yet was by the Spirit of his Father permitted to a trial and molestation by the spirits of darkness. And this is St. James's counsel, "My brethren count it all joy when ye enter into divers temptations, knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience." So far is a blessing, when the Spirit is the instrument of our motion, and brings us to the trial of our faith: but if the Spirit leaves us, and delivers us over to the devil, not to be tempted, but to be abused and ruined, it is a sad condition and the great instance of their infelicity whom the church, upon sufficient reason and with a competent authority, delivers over to Satan, by the infliction of the greater excommunication.

8. As soon as it was permitted to the devil to tempt our Lord, he, like fire, had no power to suspend his act, but was as entirely determined by the fulness of his malice, as a natural agent, by the appetites of nature; that we may know to whom we owe the happiness of all those hours and days of peace in which we sit under the trees of paradise, and see no serpent encircling the branches or presenting us with fair fruit to ruin us. It is the mercy of God we have the quietness of a minute; for if the devil's chain were taken off he would make our very beds a torment, "our tables to be a snare," our sleeps fantastic, lustful and

illusive, and every sense should have an object of delight and danger, an hyena to kiss, and to perish in its embraces. But the Holy Jesus having been assaulted by the devil, and felt his malice by the experiments of humanity, is become so merciful a high priest, and so sensible of our sufferings and danger, by the apprehensions of compassion, that he hath put a hook into the nostrils of leviathan; and although the relics of seven nations be in the borders and fringes of our country, yet we live as safe as did the Israelites, upon whom sometimes an inroad and invasion was made, and sometimes they had rest forty years, and when the storm came, some remedy was found out, by his grace whose permission the tempest was stirred up: and we find many persons who in seven years meet not with a violent temptation to a crime, but their battles are against impediments and retardations of improvement; their own rights are not directly questioned, but the devil and sin are wholly upon the defensive. Our duty here is an act of affection to God, making returns of thanks for the protection, and of duty to secure and continue the favour.

9. But the design of the Holy Ghost being to expose Jesus to the temptation, he arms himself with fasting, and prayer, and baptism, and the Holy Spirit, against the day of battle; he continues in the wilderness forty days and forty nights without meat or drink, attending to immediate addresses and colloquies with God, not suffering the interruption of meals, but representing his own and the necessities of all mankind with such affections and instances of spirit, love and wisdom, as might express the excellency of his person, and promote the work of our redemption; his conversation being in this interval but a resemblance of angelical perfection, and his fasts not an instrument of mortification, for he needed none, he had contracted no stain from his own nor his parents' acts; neither do we find that he was

at all hungry, or afflicted with his abstinence, till after the expiration of forty days. "He was afterwards an hungry," (said the evangelist,) and his abstinence from meat might be a desecration of his faculties, and an opportunity of prayer, but we are not sure it intended any thing else; but it may concern the prudence of religion to snatch at this occasion of duty so far as the instance is imitable, and in all violences of temptation to fast and pray. Prayer being a rare antidote against the poison, and fasting a convenient disposition to intense, actual, and undisturbed prayer. And we may remember also that if we have been baptized and consigned with the Spirit of God, and have received the adoption of sons, and the graces of sanctification in that baptism, and had then the seed of God put into us, and then we put on Christ, and entering into battle put on the whole armour of righteousness; and therefore we may, by observing our strength, gather also our duty and greatest obligation, to fight manfully, that we may triumph gloriously.

10. The devil's first temptation of Christ, was upon the instances and first necessities of nature; Christ was hungry, and the devil invited him to break his fast at the expense of a miracle, by turning the stones into bread. But the answer Jesus made was such as taught us, since the ordinary providence of God is sufficient for our provision or support, extraordinary ways of satisfying necessities are not to be undertaken; but God ~~must~~ be relied upon, his time attended, his manner entertained, and his measure thankfully received. Jesus refused to be relieved, and denied to manifest the divinity of his person, rather than do an act which had in it the intimation of a doubtful spirit, or might be expounded a disreputation to God's providence. And therefore it is an improvident care and impious security, to take evil courses, and use vile instruments, to furnish our table, and provide for our necessities. God will certainly

give us bread, and till he does, we can live by the breath of his mouth, by the word of God, by the light of his countenance, by the refreshment of his promises; for if God gives not provisions into our granaries, he can feed us out of his own, that is, out of the repositories of charity. If the flesh-pots be removed, he can also alter the appetite; and when our stock is spent, he can also lessen the necessity; or if that continues, he can drown the sense of it in a deluge of patience and resignation. Every word of God's mouth can create a grace, and every grace can supply two necessities, both of the body and the spirit, by the comforts of *this* to support *that*, that they may bear each others burthen, and alleviate the pressure.

11. But the devil is always prompting us to change our stones into bread, our sadnesses into sensual comfort, our drynesses into inundations of fancy and exterior sweetnesses; for he knows that the ascetic tables of mortification and the stones of the desert are more healthful than the fulnesses of voluptuousness and the corn of the vallies. He cannot endure we should live a life of austerity or self-denial; if he can get us but to satisfy our senses, and a little more freely to please our natural desires, he then hath a fair field for the battle; but so long as we force him to fight in hedges and morasses, encircling and crowding up his strengths into disadvantages, by our stone walls, our hardnesses of discipline and rudenesses of mortification, we can with more facility repel his flatteries, and receive fewer incommodities of spirit. But thus the devil will abuse us by the impotency of our natural desires, and therefore let us go to God for satisfaction of our wishes. God can, and does, when it is good for us, change our stones into bread; for he is a Father so merciful, that if we ask him a fish, he will not give us a scorpion; if we ask him bread, he will not offer us a stone; but will satisfy all our desires by

ministrations of the Spirit, making stones to become our meat, and tears our drink; which although they are unpleasant and harsh to natural appetites, yet by the operation and influences of God's holy Spirit they are made instruments of health, and life, and salvation.

12. The devil, perceiving Jesus to be a person of greater eminency and perfection, than to be moved by sensual and low desires, makes a second assault by a temptation something more spiritual, and tempts him to presumption and indiscreet confidence; to a throwing himself down from the pinnacles of the temple, upon the stock of predestination, that God might secure him by the ministry of angels, and so prove his being the Son of God. And indeed it is usual with the devil, when severe persons have so much mortified their lower appetites, that they are not easily overcome by an invitation of carnality or intemperance, to stir them up to opinions of their own sanctity, and make their first escaping prove their second and greater danger. But that the devil should persuade Jesus to throw himself down because he was the Son of God, was an invitation to no purpose, save only that it gave occasion to this truth: that God's providence secures all his sons in the ways of nature, and while they are doing their duty; but loves not to be tempted to acts unreasonable and unnecessary. God will protect his servants in or from all evils happening without their knowledge, or against their will; but not from evils of their own procuring. Heron, an inhabitant of the desert, suffered the same temptation, and was overcome by it; for he died with his fall, sinfully and ingloriously. For the caresses of God's love to his saints and servants, are security against all but themselves. The devil and all the world offer to do them mischief, but then they shall be safe, because they are innocent; if they once offer to do the same to themselves, they loose their protection, because they lost their

prudence and their charity. But here also it will concern all those who by their eminent employment and greater ministries in ecclesiasticals are set upon the pinnacle of the temple, to take care that the devil tempt not them to a precipice; a fall from so great a height will break the bones in pieces; and yet there also the station is less firm, the posture most uneasy, the prospect vertiginous, and the devil busy and desirous to thrust us headlong.

13. St. Hierom here observes well, the devil intending mischief to our blessed Saviour, invited him to cast himself down. He may persuade us to a fall, but cannot precipitate us without our own act. And it is an infinite mercy in God, that the devil, who is of malice infinite, is of so restrained and limited a power, that he can do us no ghostly disadvantage, but by persuading us to do it ourselves. And then it will be a strange imprudence to lay violent and unreasonable hands upon ourselves, and do that mischief which our strongest and most malicious adversary cannot; or to be invited by the only rhetoric of a dog's barking, to come near him, to untie his chain, to unloose his muzzle, for no other end but that we may be bitten. Just such a fool is every person that consents to the temptations of the devil.

14. By this time the devil began to perceive that this was the Son of God, and designed to be the king of all the world, and therefore resolved for the last assault to proffer him the kingdoms of the world; thinking ambition more likely to ruin him, because he knew it was that which prevailed upon himself, and all those fallen stars, the angels of darkness. That the devil told a lie it is most likely, when he said, he had power to dispose of the kingdoms of the world; for originally and by proper inherent right God alone disposes all governments: but it is also certain, that the devil is a person capable of a delegate employment in some great mutation of states; and many pro-

babilities have been observed by wise personages, persuading that the grandeur of the Roman empire was in the degrees of increment and decrement permitted to the power and managing of the devil; that the greatness of that government, being in all appearance full of advantage to Satan's kingdom, and employed for the dis-improvement of the weak beginnings and improbable increase of christianity, might give lustre and demonstration to it, that it came from God; since the great permissions of power made to the devil, and acted with all art and malice in defiance of the religion, could produce no other effect upon it but that it made it grow greater; and the greatness was made more miraculous, since the devil, when his chain was off, fain would, but could not suppress it.

15. The Lamb of God, that heard him with patience tempt him to do himself a mischief, and to throw himself headlong, could by no means endure it when he tempted to a direct dishonouring of God. Our own injuries are opportunities of patience; but when the glory of God and his immediate honour is the question, then is the occasion and precise minute for the flames of a clear-shining and unconsuming zeal. But the care of God's glory had so filled and employed all the faculties of Jesus, that he takes no notice of the offer: and it were well also, that we had fewer opinions of the lustre of worldly dignities, or at least that we in imitation of our blessed Master should refuse to accept all the world, when it is to be bought of the devil at the expense of a deadly sin. For that government cannot be very honourable that makes us slaves to the worst of tyrants; and all those princes and great personages, who by injury and usurpation possess and invade others' rights, would do well to consider, that a kingdom is too dearly paid for, if the condition be first to worship the devil.

10. When the devil could do no good, "he departed for a time." If he could ever have spied a time of returning, he wanted not will nor malice to observe and use it : and although Jesus was a person without danger, yet I doubt not but the Holy Ghost described that circumstance, that we should not have the securities of a deep peace, when we have had the success of conquerors ; for a surprise is most full of horror and of more certain ruin ; so that we have no security, but a perpetual observation ; that together with the grace of God, (who takes care of all his servants, and will drive away the tempter when he pleases, and help us always when we need) is as great an argument for our confidence and encouragement to our prayers and address to God, as it is safety to our person and honour to our victory. And let us account it our honour, that the trials of temptation, which is the greatest sadness of our condition, are hallowed by the temptation of Jesus, and our condition assured by his assistances, and the assistances are procured by our prayers most easily upon the advantage of his sufferings and compassion. And we may observe that poverty, predestination, and ambition are the three quivers from which the devil drew his arrows, which (as the most likely to prevail) he shot against Christ : but now he shot in vain, and gave proof that he might be overcome ; our captain hath conquered for himself and us. By these instances we see our danger, and how we are provided of a remedy.

If Satan did not know Christ fully, the temptations were well adapted to ascertain all his true character. And, if Satan did know Him to be "the Son of God," the temptation was intended to *hide* this fact from the world, or to convey the idea that Satan was not *afraid* of Him. Whichever way, he failed, although all his talents were put on the stretch to delude. How true, that the seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head? Satan was foiled chiefly in his understanding, or mental powers.—Ed.

THE PRAYER.

O Holy Jesus, who didst fulfil all righteousness, and didst live a life of evenness and obedience and community, submitting thyself to all rites and sanctions of divine ordinance ; give me grace to live in the fellowship of thy holy church, a life of piety, and without singularity, receiving the sweet influence of thy sacraments and rites, and living in the purities and innocences of my first sanctification. I adore thy goodness infinite, that thou hast been pleased to wash my soul in the laver of regeneration, that thou hast consigned me to the participation of thy favours by the holy Eucharist. Let me not return to the infirmities of the old man, whom thou hast crucified on thy cross, and who was buried with thee in baptism ; nor renew the crimes of my sinful years, which were so many recessions from baptismal purities : but let me ever receive the emissions of thy divine Spirit, and be a son of God, a partner of thine immortal inheritance ; and when thou seest it needful, I may receive testimony from heaven, that I am thy servant and thy child. And grant that I may so walk, that I neither disrepute the honour of the christian institution, nor stain the whitenesses of that innocence which thou didst invest my soul withal when I put on the baptismal robe, nor break my holy vow, nor lose my right of inheritance which thou hast given me by promise and grace ; but that thou mayest love me with the love of a father, and a brother, and a husband, and a Lord, and I serve thee in the communion of saints, in the reception of sacraments, in the actions of a holy life, and in a never-failing love or uninterrupted devotion to the glory of thy name, and the promotion of all those ends of religion which thou hast designed in the excellent economy of christianity. Grant this, Holy Jesus, for thy mer-

cy's sake, and for the honour of thy name, which is and shall be adored for ever and ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE V.

Of Temptation.

1. God who is the fountain of good, did choose rather to bring good out of evil, than not to suffer any evil to be, not only because variety of accidents and natures do better entertain our affections and move our spirits, which are transported and suffer great impressions by a circumstance, by the very opposition and accidental lustre and eminency of contraries; but also that the glory of the Divine Providence in turning the nature of things into the designs of God might be illustrious, and that we may in a mixed condition have more observation, and after our danger and our labour may obtain a greater reward: for temptation is the opportunity of virtue and a crown; God having disposed us in such a condition, that our virtues must be difficult, our inclinations averse, our avocations many, our hostilities bitter, our dangers proportionable, that our labour might be great, our inclinations suppressed and corrected, our intentions be made actual, our enemies be resisted, and our dangers pass into security and honour, after a contest, and a victory, and a perseverance. It is every man's case. Trouble is as certainly the lot of our nature and inheritance, and we are so sure to be tempted, that in the deepest peace and silence of spirit oftentimes is our greatest danger; "not to be tempted" is sometimes our most subtle temptation. It is certain then, we cannot be secure when our security is our enemy; but therefore we must do as God himself does, make the best of it, and not be

sad at that which is the public portion and the case of all men, but order it according to the intention, place it in the eye of virtue, that all its actions and motions may tend thither, there to be changed into felicities. But certain it is, unless we first be cut and hewn in the mountains, we shall not be fixed in the temple of God; but by incision and contusions our roughnesses may become plain, or our sparks kindled, and we may be either for the temple or the altar, spiritual building or holy fire. something that God shall delight in, and then the temptation was not amiss.

2. And therefore we must not wonder that oftentimes it so happens, that nothing will remove a temptation, no diligence, no advices, no labour, no prayers; not because these are ineffectual, but because it is most fit the temptation should abide for ends of God's designing: and although St. Paul was a person whose prayers were likely to be prevalent, and his industry of much prudence and efficacy toward the drawing out of his thorn, yet God would not do it, but continued his war, only promising to send him succour, "My grace is sufficient for thee:" meaning, he should have an enemy to try his spirit and improve it, and he should also have God's grace to comfort and support it; but as without God's grace the enemy would spoil him, so without an enemy God's grace would never swell up into glory, and crown him. For the caresses of a pleasant fortune are apt to swell extravagances of spirit, and burst into the dissolution of manners, and unmixed joy is dangerous: but if in our fairest flowers we spy a locust, or feel the uneasiness of a sackcloth under our fine linen, or our purple be tied with an uneven and a rude cord, any little trouble, but to correct our wildnesses, though it be but a death's-head served up at our feasts, it will make our tables fuller of health and freer from snare; it will allay our spirits, making them

to retire from the weaknesses of dispersion, to the union and strength of a sober collectiveness.

3. Since therefore it is no part of our employment or our care to be free from all the attempts of an enemy, but to be safe in despite of his hostility, it now will concern us to inform ourselves of the state of the war in general, and then to make provisions and to put on armour accordingly.

4. First, St. Cyprian often observes, and makes much of the discourse, that the devil, when he intends a battery, first views the strength and situation of the place. His sense, drawn out of the cloud of an allegory, is this; the devil first considers the constitution and temper of the person he is to tempt, and where he observes his natural inclination apt for a vice, he presents him with objects, and opportunity, and arguments, fitting to his captive disposition; from which he is likely to receive the smaller opposition, since there is a party within that desires his admission. Thus to lustful natures he represents the softer whispers of the spirit of fornication; to the angry and revengeful, he offers to consideration the satisfactions and content of a full revenge, and the emissions of anger; to the envious, he makes panegyrics of our rivals, and swells our fancies to opinion, our opinion to self-love, self-love to arrogance, and these are supported by contempt of others, and all terminate upon envy, and expire in malice. Now in these cases, when our natures are captive and unhandsome, it were good we were conscious of our own weaknesses, and by special arts and strengths of mortification fortified that part where we are apt and exposed to danger: we are sure enough to meet a storm there, and we also are likely to perish in it, unless we correct those aversenesses and natural indispositions, and reduce them to the evennesses of virtue, or the affections and moderation of a good nature. Let us be

sure that the devil take not a handle from our own branches to fit the axe, that so he may cut the tree down: and certainly he that does violence to his nature, will not be easy to the entertainment of affections preternatural and violent.

5. Secondly, But the devil also observes all our exterior accidents, occasions, and opportunities of action; he sees what company we keep, he observes what degrees of love we have to our wives, what looseness of affection towards children, how prevalent their persuasions, how inconvenient their discourses, how trifling their interests, and to what degrees of determination they move us by their importunity or their power. The devil tempted Adam by his wife, because he saw his affections too pliant, and encircling her with the entertainment of fondness, joy, wonder, and amorous fancy. It was her hand that made the fruit beautiful to Adam; she saw it fair of itself, and so she ate; but Adam was not moved by that argument, but the woman gave it me, and I did eat: she gave vivacity to the temptation, and efficacy to the argument. And the severity of the man's understanding would have given a reasonable answer to the insinuations of the serpent. That was an ugly beast, and his arguments not being of themselves convincing to a wise person, either must put on advantages of a fair insinuation and representment, or they are returned with scorn. But when the beautiful hands of his young virgin mistress became the orators, the temptation was an *amorevolezza*, he kisses the presenter, and hugs the ruin. Here therefore it is our safest course, to make a retrenchment of all those excrescences of affections, which, like wild and irregular suckers, draw away nourishment from the trunk, making it as sterile as itself is unprofitable. As we must restrain the inclinations of nature, so also of society and relation, when they become inconvenient; and, let nothing of our

family be so adopted or naturalized into our affections, as to create within us a new concupiscence, and a second time spoil our nature. What God intended to us for a help, let not our fondnesses convert into a snare; and he that is not ready to deny the importunities and to reject the interests of a wife, or child, or friend, when the question is for God, deserves to miss the comforts of a good, and to feel the troubles of an imperious woman.

6. Thirdly, We also have ends and designs of our own, some great purpose upon which the greatest part of our life turns; it may be we are to raise a family, to recover a sunk estate, or else ambition, honour, or a great employment is the great hinge of all our greater actions; and some men are apt to make haste to be rich, or are to pass through a great many difficulties to be honourable; and here the devil will swell the hopes, and obstruct the passages; he will heighten the desire, and multiply the business of access, making the concupiscence more impatient, and yet the way to the purchase of our purposes so full of employment and variety, that both the implacable desire and the multitude of changes and transactions may increase the danger, and multiply the sin. When the enemy hath observed our ends, he makes his temptations to reflect from that angle which is *direct* upon them; provoking to malice and impatience against whomsoever we find standing in our way, whether willingly or by accident; then follow, naturally, all those sins which are instrumental to removing the impediments, to facilitating the passage, to endearing our friends, to procuring more confidants, to securing our hopes, and entering upon possession. Simon Magus had a desire to be accounted some great one; and by that purpose he was tempted to sorcery and divination; and with a new object he brought a new sin into the world, adding simony to his sorcery, and taught posterity that crime, which till then had

neither name nor being. And those ecclesiastics who violently affect rich or pompous prelacies, pollute themselves with worldly arts, growing covetous as Syrian merchants, ambitious as the Levantine princes, factious as the mob, revengeful as jealousy, and proud as conquerors and usurpers; and by this means beasts are brought into the temple, and the temple itself is exposed to sale, and the holy rites as well as the beasts of sacrifice are made venial. To prevent the infinite inconveniences that thrust themselves into the common and great roads of our life, the best course is to cut our great channel into little rivulets, making our ends the more, that we may be indifferent to any; proposing nothing great, that our desires may be little; for so we shall be better able to digest the troubles of an enemy, the contradictions of an unhandsome accident, the crossing of our hopes; because our desires are even, and our ends are less considerable, and we can with much readiness divert upon another purpose, having another ready with the same proportion to our hopes and desires as the first. Thus, if we propound to ourselves an honest employment or a quiet retirement, a work of charity abroad or of devotion at home, if we miss in our first setting forth, we return to shore, where we can negotiate with content, it being alike to us either to traffic abroad with more gain, or trade at home with more safety. But when we once grow great in our desires, fixing too earnestly upon one object, we either grow impatient, or take ill courses and use unlawful means, or else are miserable in the loss and frustration of our hopes, (like the women of Ramah, who would not be comforted.) Let, therefore, our life be moderate, our desires reasonable, our hopes little, our ends none in eminency and prelation above others; for as the rays of light passing through the thin air end in a small and undiscerned pyramid, but reflected upon a wall are doubled and increase

the warmth to a scorching and troublesome heat, so the desires of man, if they pass through an even and an indifferent life, towards the issues of an ordinary and necessary course, they are little and within command, but if they pass upon an end or aim of difficulty or ambition, they duplicate and grow to a disturbance; and we have seen the even and temperate lives of indifferent persons continue in many degrees of innocence; but the temptation of busy designs is too great even for the best of dispositions.

7. But these temptations are gross and material, and soon discernible; it will require some greater observation to arm against such as are more spiritual and immaterial. For he hath apples to cozen children, and gold for men; the kingdoms of the world for the ambition of princes, and the vanities of the world for the intemperate; he hath discourses and fair-spoken principles to abuse the pretenders to reason, and he hath common prejudices for the more vulgar understandings. Amongst these I choose to consider such as are by way of principle or proposition.

8. The first great principle of temptation I shall note is a general mistake, which excuses very many of our crimes upon pretence of *infirmity*, calling all those sins to which by natural disposition we are inclined (though by carelessness and evil customs they are heightened to a habit) by the name of sins of infirmity; to which men suppose they have reason and title to pretend. If, when they have committed a crime, their conscience checks them, and they are troubled, and, during the interval and abatement of the heats of desire, resolve against it, and commit it readily at the next opportunity; then they cry out against the weakness of their nature, and think, as long as this body of death is about them, it must be thus, and that this condition may stand with the state of grace. And then the sins shall return periodically, like the revolutions of a quartan ague, well and ill

for ever, till death surprises the mistaker. This is a patron of sins, and makes the temptation prevalent by an authentic instrument: and they pretend the words of St. Paul, "For the good that I would, that I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do. For there is a law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind, bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." And thus the state of sin is mistaken for a state of grace, and the imperfections of the law are miscalled the affections and necessities of nature, that they might seem to be incurable, and the persons apt for an excuse therefore, because for nature there is no absolute cure. But that these words of St. Paul may not become a savour of death and instruments of a temptation to us, it is observable, that the apostle by a fiction of person (as is usual with him) speaks of himself not as in the state of regeneration under the gospel, but under the difficulties, obscurities, insufficiencies, and imperfections of the law, which indeed he there contends to have been a rule good and holy, apt to remonstrate our misery, because by its prohibitions, and limits given to natural desires, it made actions (before indifferent) now to be sins, it added many curses to the breakers of it, and by an efficacy of contrariety it made us more desirous of what was now unlawful: but it was a covenant in which our nature was restrained, but not helped; it was provoked, but not sweetly assisted; our understandings were instructed, but our wills not sanctified, and there were no suppletories of repentance; every greater sin was like the fall of an angel, irreparable by any mystery, or sign, recorded or enjoined. Now of a man under this covenant he describes the condition to be such, that he understands his duty, but by the infirmities of nature he is certain to fall, and by the helps of the law not strengthened against it, nor restored after it; and therefore he calls himself under that notion a miserable man sold under sin, not

doing according to the rules of the law, or the dictates of his reason, but by the unaltered misery of his nature certain to prevaricate. But the person described here is not St. Paul, is not any justified person, not so much as a Christian, but one who is under a state of direct opposition to the state of grace; as will manifestly appear if we observe the antithesis from St. Paul's own character. For the man here named is such, as in whom sin wrought all concupiscence, in whom sin lived, and slew him, (so that he was dead in trespasses and sins;) and although he did delight in the law after his inward man, that is, his understanding had intellectual complacences and satisfactions, which afterwards he calls serving the law of God with his mind, (that is, in the first dispositions and preparations of his spirit) yet he could act nothing; for the law in his members did enslave him, and brought him into captivity to the law of sin; so that this person was full of actual and effective lusts, he was a slave to sin and dead in trespasses. But the state of a regenerate person is such, as to have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts; in whom sin did not reign, not only in the mind, but even also not in the mortal body; over whom sin had no dominion; in whom the old man was crucified, and the body of sin was destroyed, and sin not at all served. And to make the antithesis yet clearer, in the very beginning of the next chapter the apostle saith, that the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made him free from the law of sin and death; under which law he complained immediately before, that he was sold and killed, to shew the person was not the same in these so different and contradictory representments. No man in the state of grace can say, "The evil that I would not, that I do;" if by evil he means any evil that is habitual, or in its own nature deadly.

9. So that now, let no man pretend an inevitable necessity to sin; for if ever it comes

to a custom or to a great violation, though but in a single act, it is a condition of carnality, not of spiritual life; and those are not the infirmities of nature, but the weaknesses of grace, that make us sin so frequently; which the apostle truly affirms to the same purpose "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that [ye cannot] or [that ye do not do] the things that ye would." This disability proceeds from the strength of the flesh, and weakness of the spirit: for he adds, "But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law;" saying plainly, that the state of such a combat, and disability of doing good, is a state of a man under the law, or in the flesh, which he accounts all one; but every man that is sanctified under the gospel is led by the Spirit, and walks in the Spirit, and brings forth the fruits of the Spirit. It is not our excuse, but the aggravation of our sin, that we fall again in despite of so many resolutions to the contrary. And let us not flatter ourselves into a confidence of sin, by supposing the state of grace can stand with the custom of any sin, for it is the state either of an *animalis homo*, (as the apostle calls him) that is, a man in pure naturals, without the clarity of divine revelations, who cannot perceive or understand the things of God; or else of the carnal man, that is, a person, who though in his mind he is convinced, yet he is not yet freed from the dominion of sin, but only hath his eyes opened, but not his bonds loosed. For by the perpetual analogy and frequent expresses in Scripture, the spiritual person, or the man redeemed by the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, is free from the law, and the dominion, and the kingdom, and the power of all sin. "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

10. But sins of infirmity, in the true sense of Scripture, signify nothing but the sins of an unholy and an unsanctified nature, when they

are taken for actions done against the strength of resolution, out of the strength of natural appetite and violence of desire ; and therefore in Scripture the state of sin and the state of infirmity is all one. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly, (saith the apostle :) the condition in which we were when Christ became a sacrifice for us was certainly a condition of sin and enmity with God, and yet this he calls a being without strength, or in a state of weakness and infirmity ; which we, who believe all our strength to be derived from Christ's death, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of his ascension, may soon apprehend to be the true meaning of the word. And in this sense is that saying of our blessed Saviour, "The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick:" for therefore Christ came into the world to save sinners ; those are the persons of Christ's infirmity, whose restitution and reduction to a state of life and health was his great design. So that those who sin habitually, that is, constantly, periodically, at the revolution of a temptation, or frequently, or easily, are persons who still remain in the state of sin and death ; and their intervals of piety are but preparations to a state of grace, which they may be when they are not used to countenance or excuse the sin, or to flatter the person. But if the intermediate resolutions of emendation (though they never run beyond the next assault of passion or desire) be taken for a state of grace blended with infirmities of nature, they become destructive of all those purposes, through our mistake, which they might have promoted if they had been rightly understood, observed, and cherished. Sometimes indeed, the greatness of a temptation may become an instrument to excuse some degrees of the sin, and make the man pitiable, whose ruin seems almost certain, because of the greatness and violence of the enemy, meeting with a natural aptness ;

but then the question will be, whither and to what actions that strong temptation carries him ; whether to a work of a mortal nature, or only to a small irregularity, that is, whether to death, or to a wound ; for whatever the principle be, if the effect be death, the man's case was therefore to be pitied, because his ruin was the more inevitable ; not so pitied, as to excuse him from the state of death. For let the temptation be never so strong, every christian man hath assistances sufficient to support him, so as that, without his own yielding, no temptation is stronger than that grace which God offers him ; for if it were, it were not so much as a sin of infirmity, it were no sin at all. This therefore must be certain to us ; when the violence of our passions or desires overcomes our resolutions and fairer purposes, against the dictate of our reason, that indeed is a state of infirmity, but it is also of sin and death, a state of immortification ; because the offices of grace are to crucify the old man, that is, our former and impurer conversation, to subdue the petulance of our passions, to reduce them to reason, and to restore empire and dominion to the superior faculties. So that this condition, in proper speaking, is not so good as the infirmity of grace ; but it is no grace at all ; for whoever are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts ; those other imperfect, ineffective resolutions are but the first approaches of the kingdom of Christ ; nothing but the clarities of lightning, dark as soon as light ; and they therefore cannot be excuses to us, because the contrary weaknesses (as we call them) do not make the sin involuntarily, but chosen and pursued, and in true speaking is the strength of the lust, not the infirmity of a state of grace.

17. But yet there is a condition of grace which is a state of little and imperfect ones, such as are called in Scripture "smoking flax and bruised reeds;" which is a state of the first

dawning of the sun of righteousness, when the lights of *grace* now rise upon our eyes; and then indeed they are weak, and have a more dangerous neighbourhood of temptations and desires, but they are not subdued by them: they sin not by direct election; their actions criminal are but like the slime of Nilus, leaving rats half formed; they sin but seldom, and when they do, it is in small instances, and then also by surprise, by inadvertency; and then also they interrupt their own acts, and lessen them perpetually; and never do an act of sinfulness, but the principle is such as makes it to be involuntary in many degrees. For when the understanding is clear, and the dictate of reason undisturbed and determinate, whatsoever then produces an irregular action excuses not, because the action is not made the less voluntary by it; for the action is not made involuntary from any other principle but from some defect of understanding, either in act, or habit, or faculty. For where there is no such defect, there is a full deliberation according to the capacity of the man, and then the act of election that follows is clear and full, and is that proper disposition which makes him truly capable of punishment or reward respectively. Now although in the first beginnings of grace there is not a direct ignorance to excuse totally; yet because a sudden surprise or an inadvertency is not always in our power to prevent, these things do lessen the election and freedom of the action: and then because they are but seldom, and never proceed to any length of time, or any great instances of crime, and are every day made still more infrequent, because grace growing stronger, the observation and advertency of the spirit and the attendance of the inner man grows more effectual and busy; this is a state of the imperfection of grace, but a state of grace it is. And it is more commonly observed to be expressed in the imperfection of our good actions, than in

the irregularity of bad actions: and in this sense are those words of our blessed Saviour. "the Spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak; which in this instance was not expressed in sin, but in a natural imperfection, which then was a recession from a civility, a not watching with the Lord. And this is the only infirmity that can consist with the state of grace.

12. So that now we may lay what load we please upon our nature, and call our violent and unmortified desires by the name of an imperfect grace; but then we dangerously mistake, and flatter ourselves into an opinion of piety, when we are "in the gall of bitterness;" so making our misery the more certain and irremediable, because we think it needs nothing but a perpetuity and perseverance to bring us to heaven. The violence of passion and desires is a misery of nature, but it is also a perfect principle of sin, multiplying and repeating the acts, but not lessening the malignity.—But sins of infirmity, when we mean sins of a less and lower malice, are sins of a less and imperfect choice, because of the unavoidable imperfection of the understanding. Sins of infirmity are always infirm sins, that is, weak and imperfect in their principle, and in their nature, and in their design; that is, they are actions incomplete in all their capacities; but then passions and periodical inclinations consisting with a regular and determined and actual understanding must never be their principle: for whatsoever proceeds thence is destructive of spiritual life, and inconsistent with the state of grace. But sins of infirmity, when they pretend to a less degree of malignity and a greater degree of excuse, are such as are little more than sins of pure and inculpable ignorance: for in that degree in which any other principle is mixed with them, in the same degree they are criminal and inexcusable. For as a sin of infirmity is pretended to be a little in its

value and malignity, so it is certain, if it be great in the instance, it is not a sin of infirmity; that is, it is a state or act of death, and absolutely inconsistent with the state of grace.

13. Secondly, Another principle of temptation pregnant with sin, and fruitful of monsters, is a weaker pretence, which less weary and credulous persons abuse themselves withal; pretending as a ground for their confidence and incorrigible pursuance of their courses, that they have a good meaning, that they intend sometimes well, and sometimes not ill, and that this shall be sufficient to sanctify their actions, and to hallow their sin. And this is of worse malice, when religion is the colour for a war, and the preservation of faith made the warrant for destruction of charity, and a zeal for God made the false light to lead us to disobedience to man, and hatred of idolatry is the usher of sacrilege, and the defiance of superstition the introducer of profaneness, and reformation made the colour for a schism, and liberty of conscience the way to a bold and saucy heresy: for the end may indeed hallow an indifferent action, but can never make straight a crooked and irregular action. It was not enough for Saul to cry "for God and the sacrifice," that he spared the fat flocks of Amalek: and it would be a strange zeal and forwardness, that rather than the altar of incense should not smoke will burn assafetida, or the marrow of a man's bones. For as God will be honoured by us, so also in ways of his own appointment: we are the *makers* of our religion, if we in our zeal for God do what he hath *forbidden* us. And every sin committed for religion, is just such a violence done to religion, as it seeks to prevent or remedy.

14. And so it is if it be committed for an end or pretence of charity as well as of religion. We must be careful that no pretence engage us upon an action that is certainly criminal in

its own nature. Charity may sometimes require our lives, but no obligation can endear a damnation to us; we are not about to the choice of an eternal ruin, to save another. Indeed so far as an option will go, it may concern the excrescences of piety to chose by a tacit or express act of volation "to become Anathema for our brethren," that is, by putting a case and fiction of law, to suppose it better, and wish it rather, that I should perish than my nation. Thus far is charitable, because it is innocent; for as it is great love to our country, so it is no uncharitableness to ourselves: for such options always are ineffective, and produce nothing but rewards of charity, and a greater glory. And the Holy Jesus himself, who only could be and was effectively accursed to save us, got by it an exceeding and mighty glorification; and St. Paul got himself advantage by his charitable devotion for his countrymen. But since God never puts the question to us, so, that either we or our nation must be damned, he having fixed every man's final condition upon his own actions in the virtue and obedience of Christ, if we mistake the expresses of charity, and suffer ourselves to be damned indeed for God's glory or our brethren's good, we spoil the duty, and ruin ourselves when our option comes to act. But it is observable, that although religion is often pretended to justify a sin, yet *charity* is but seldom; which makes it full of suspicion, that religion is but the *cover* to the death's-head, and at the best is but an accusing of God, that he is not willing or not able to preserve religion without our irregular and impious co-operations. But, however, though it might concern us to wish *ourselves* rather accursed than religion, or our prince, or our country should perish, (for I find no instances that it is lawful so much as to wish it for the preservation of a single friend;) yet it is against charity to bring such a wish to pass, and by a sin to damn ourselves

really for a good end either of religion or charity.

15. Let us therefore serve God as he hath described the way ; for all our accesses to him, being acts of his free concession and grace, must be by his own designation and appointment. We might as well have chosen what shape our bodies should be of, as of what instances the substance of our religion should consist.

16. Thirdly, a third principle of temptation is, an opinion of prosecuting actions of civility, compliance, and society, to the luxation of a point of piety and stricter duty : and good natures, persons of humane and sweeter dispositions, are too apt to dash upon this rock of offence. But the evil that I would note is, that there are some conditions of men to whom a vice is so accustomed, that he that mingles with them must handle the crime and touch the venom. There are some vices which are national, there are some that are points of honour, some are civilities of entertainment ; and they are therefore accounted unavoidable, because the understandings of men are degenerate as their manners, and it is accounted sottish and fantastical not to communicate in their accustomed loosenesses. Amongst some men, all their first addresses are drinkings, their entertainments intemperate beyond the permissions of christian austerity ; their drink is humorous, and their humours quarrellous, and it is dishonourable not to engage in duel, and venture your soul to vindicate an empty reputation. These inconveniences rely upon false opinions and vain fancies, having no greater foundation than the sottish discourses of ignorant and ungodly persons ; and they have no peculiar and appropriate remedy, but a resolute severity of manners, and a consideration of what is required of us as christians to confront against those fonder customs and expectations from us, as we engage in the

puddles of the world and are blended in society.

17. To which purposes we must be careful not to engage too freely in looser company ; never without business or unavoidable accidents ; and when we mingle in affairs, it will concern our safety to watch, lest multitude of talk, goodness and facility of nature, the delight of company, and the freedom and ill-customed civilities, do by degrees draw us away from our guards and retirement of spirit. For in these cases every degree of dissolution disarms us of our strength ; and if we give way so far as we think it tolerable, we instantly and undiscernably pass into unlawful and criminal. But our best defences are deposited in a severe and prudent understanding, and discerning the sottishness of such principles, which represent vice in civil language, and propound a crime to you under the cover of kindness ; which is just so much recompense, as it is satisfaction to a condemned person, that he was accused by a witty orator, and sentenced by an eloquent judge. Remember always, that "the friendships of the world are enmity with God ;" and that those societies which are combined by relations of drink, and wantonness, and impertinency, and crimes, are either inconsiderable in civility, or reason, or reputation ; no wise man is moved by their testimony or discourses ; and they are so impotent, rude and undiscerning a theatre, that most commonly he is the best man who from thence is the worst reported and represented.

18. But in all the instances of this great evil, the very stating the question right is above half the victory. For it is a question between mistaken civility and certain duty ; piety on one side, and the disguises of humanity on the other. God and man are the parties interested : and to counterpoise the influence of the sight and face of man, (which being a visible communication, it is not in some natures to neglect

or contradict) there are all the excellences of God, the effects of his power, his certain presence and omniscience, the severities of his judgment, and the sweetness and invitation of his mercies; besides the prudence, wisdom, and satisfaction to the spirit when we wisely neglect such sottish and low abuses and temptations, to conform to the rules of reason and duty, in compliance with the purposes of God and our own felicities.

19. Thirdly, These ill-managed principles are dangers as universal as an infected air; yet there are some diseases more proper to the particular state of religion. First, to young beginners in religion Satan represents the difficulties of religion, and propounds the greater examples of holy persons, and affrights them with those mountains of piety, observing where and upon what instance of severity their fancy will be most apprehensive and afflicted: and this he fails not often to represent with a purpose, that by believing no piety less than the greatest can be good, they may despair of those heights, and retire into the securities and indifferences of a careless life. But this is to be cured by all those instruments of piety which, in special, are incentives of the love of God, and endearments of spiritual and religious affections; and particularly by consideration of the divine goodness, "who knows whereof we are made, and remembers that we are but dust," and will require no more of us than according to our powers and present capacities. But the subject matter of this temptation is considered and refuted in the discourse of the love of God.

20. But most commonly young beginners are zealous and high, and not so easily tempted to a recession, till after a long time by a revolution of affections they are abated by a deservency in holy actions. The devil uses to prompt them on, not that he loves the piety and the progress, but that he would engage

the person in imprudences and such forwardness of expresses, which either are in their own nature indiscretions, or from which, by reason of the incapacity of the person, it is necessary for him to retire. A new convert is like a bird newly entered into a net, through which possibly she might pass without danger, if her fears and unreasonable strivings did not entangle her; but when by busy and disturbed flutterings she discomposes the order of it, she is entangled and unpenned, and made a prey to her treacherous enemy. Such are the indiscreet strivings and too forward enterprises of new penitents, whom we shall observe too often undertaking great austerities, making vows and casting bands upon their liberty, and snares upon their persons, thinking nothing great enough to expiate their sin, or to present to God, or to endear their services, or secure their perseverance; and therefore they lay a load of fetters upon themselves, or rather cut off their legs that they may never go back; therefore laying an obligation of vows and intolerable burthens on themselves, that by these they may by a compendium of piety redeem the time, and by those make it impossible to prevaricate. But the observation of the sad events and final accidents of these men, hath given probation of the indiscretion of such furious addresses and beginnings. And it was prudently done of Meletius of Antioch, when he visited the dioceses of Syria, and the several religious persons famous for severe undertakings, on espying that Simcon Stylites dwelt upon a pillar, and had bound his leg with a strong chain of iron, he sent forth a smith, to cause it to be knocked off, and said, "To a man that loves God his mind is a sufficient chain." For the loads of voluntary austerities, rashly undertaken, make religion a burthen when their first heats expire; and their vows, which are intended to secure the practice and perpetuate the piety, are but the occasions of

an aggravated crime; and the vow does not secure the piety, but the weariness and satiety of the duty tempts to the breaking of the vow, or at least makes the man impatient, when he cannot persist with content, nor retire with safety.

21. It therefore concerns all spiritual guides, to manage their new converts with sober counsels and moderate permissions, knowing that sublime speculations in the metaphysics are not fit entertainment for an infant understanding. There is milk for babes, and strong meat for men of riper piety; and it will employ all the regular strength of young beginners, to contest against the relics of those mischiefs which remain since the expulsion of the old man, and to master those difficulties which by the nature of the state are certainly consequent to so late reformation. And if we by the furies of zeal and the impatience of mistaken piety are violent and indiscreet in the destroying of our enemies, we probably may tread the thistle down, and trample upon all its appearances, and yet leave the root in the ground, by haste and imprudent forwardness. Gentle and soft counsels are the surest enemies to your vice, and the best conservators and promoters of a virtuous state; but a hasty charge, and the conduct of a young leader, may engage an early spirit in dangers and dishonours. And this temptation is of so much greater danger, because it hath a face of zeal, and meets with all encouragements from without; every man being apt to cherish a convert, and to inflame his new fires: but few consider the inconveniences that are consequent to indiscreet beginnings, and the worse events usually appendant to such inconveniences.

22. Indeed it is not usual that prudence and a new kindled zeal meet in the same person: but it will therefore concern the safety of new converts, who cannot guide themselves, to give themselves up to the conduct of an experienced spiritual person, who being free in those heats

of the first apprehensions, and being long taught by the observation of the accidents of a spiritual life upon what rocks rashness and zeal usually do engage us, can best tell what degrees and what instances of religion they may with most safety undertake: but for the general, it is best in the addresses of grace, to follow the course of nature; let there be an infancy, and a childhood, and a vigorous youth, and by the divers and distant degrees of increment, let the persons be established in wisdom and grace. But above all things let them be careful that they do not lay upon themselves necessities of any lasting course, no vows of **perpetuity** in any instance of uncommanded action or **degré** of religion: for he may alter in his capacity and exterior condition; he may see by experience, that the particular engagement is imprudent; he may by the virtue of obedience, be engaged on a duty inconsistent with the conveniences and advantages of the other; and his very loss of liberty, in an uncommanded instance, may tempt him to inconvenience. But then, for the single and transient actions of piety, although in them the danger is less, even though the imprudence be great, yet it were well if **new beginners** in religion would attempt a **moderate** and an **even** piety, rather than actions of eminency, lest they retire with shame, and be afflicted with scruple, when their first heats are spent, and expire in weariness and temptation. It is good to keep within the circuits of a **man's** affections, not stretching out all the **degrees of fancy and desire**, but leaving the **appetites of religion** rather unsatisfied, and still **desiring more**, than by stretching out the whole faculty, to leave no desires but what are fulfilled and wearied.

23. Thirdly, I shall not need here to observe such temptations as are direct invitations to sin, upon occasion of the piety of holy persons; such as are security, too much confidence, pride and vanity: these are part of every man's

danger, and are to be considered upon their several arguments. Here I was only to note the general instruments of mischief. It remains now that I speak of such remedies and general antidotes, not which are proportioned to sins in special, but such as are preventions or remedies and good advices in general.

24. First, let every man abstain from all occasions of sin, as much as his condition will permit. And it were better to do some violence to our secular affairs, than to procure apparent or probable danger to our souls. For if we see not a way open and ready prepared to our iniquity, our desires oftentimes are not willing to be troubled; but *opportunity* gives life and activeness to our appetites. If David had not from his towers beheld the beauties of Bathsheba, Uriah had lived, and his wife been unattempted; but sin was brought to him by that chance, and entering at the casements of his eyes set his heart on fire, and despoiled him of his robes of honour and innocence. The riches of the wedge of gold and the beauty of the Babylonish garment, made Achan sacrilegious upon the place, who was innocent enough in his preceding purposes: and therefore that soul that makes itself an object to sin, and invites an enemy to view its possessions and live in the vicinage, loves the sin itself; and he that is pleased with the danger, would willingly be betrayed into the necessity and the pleasure of the sin: for he can have no other ends to entertain the hazards, but that he hath a farther purpose to serve upon them; he loves the pleasure of the sin, and therefore he would make the condition of sinning certain and unavoidable. And therefore holy Scripture, which is admirable and curious in the cautions and securities of virtue, does not determine its precepts in the precise commands of virtuous actions, but also binds up our senses, obstructs the passage of temptation, blocks up all the ways and avenues of vice, commanding us to

make a covenant with our eyes; not to look upon a maid; not to sit with a woman that is a singer; not to consider the wine when it sparkles, and gives it colour rightly in the cup; but to set a watch before our mouths, to keep the door of our lips, and many more instances to this purpose, that sin may not come so near as to be repulsed; as knowing sin hath then prevailed too far, when we give the denial to its solicitations.

25. We read a story of a virtuous lady, that desired of St. Athanasius to procure for her, out of the number of the widows fed from the ecclesiastical corban, an old woman, morose, peevish, and impatient, that she might by the society of so ungentle a person have often occasion to exercise her patience, her forgiveness and charity. I know not how well the counsel succeeded with her; I am sure it was not very safe: for to invite the trouble, to triumph over it, is to wage a war of an uncertain issue, for no end but to get the pleasures of the victory, which oftentimes do not pay for the trouble, and never for the danger. An Egyptian, who acknowledged fire for his God, one day doing his devotions kissed his God after the manner of worshippers, and burnt his lips. It was not in the power of that false and imaginary deity to cure the real hurt he had done to his devoutest worshipper. Just such a fool is he that kisses a danger, though with a design of virtue, and hugs an opportunity of sin for an advantage of piety; he burns himself in the neighbourhood of the flame, and twenty to one but he may perish in its embraces. And he that looks out a danger that he may overcome it, does as did the Persian, who worshipping the sun, looked upon him when he prayed him to cure his sore eyes. The sun may as well cure a weak eye, or a great burthen knit a broken arm, as a danger can do him advantage that seeks such a combat which may ruin him. and after which he rarely may have this reward.

that it may be said of him, he had the good fortune not to perish in his folly. It is easier to prevent a mischief than to cure it; and besides the pain of the wound, it is infinitely more full of difficulty to cure a broken leg, which a little care and observation would have preserved whole. To recover from a sin is none of the easiest labours that concern the sons of men; and therefore it concerns them rather not to enter into such a narrow strait, from which they can never draw back their head, without leaving their hair and skin, and their ears behind. If God please to try us, he means us no hurt, and he does it with great reason and great mercy; but if we go to try ourselves, we may mean well, but not wisely. For as it is simply unlawful for weak persons to seek a temptation, so for the more perfect it is dangerous. We have enemies enough without, and one of our own within; but we become our own tempter, when we run out to meet the world or invite the devil home, that we may throw holy water upon his flames; and call the danger nearer, that we may run from it. And certainly men are more guilty of many of their temptations than the devil, through their incuriousness or rashness doing as much mischief to themselves as he can. For he can but offer; and so much we do when we run into danger. Such were those stories of St. Antony provoking the devil to battle. If the stories had been as true as the actions were rash and ridiculous, the story had fastened a note of indiscretion upon that good man; though now I think there is nothing but a mark of fiction and falsehood on the writer.

26. Secondly, possibly without fault we may be engaged in a temptation, but then we must be diligent to resist the first beginnings; for when our strength is yet entire and unabated, if we suffer ourselves to be overcome, and consent to its first and weakest attempts, how shall we be able to resist when it hath tired our con-

testation, and wearied our patience; when we are weaker and prevailed upon, and the temptation is stronger and triumphant in many degrees of victory? By how much a hectic fever is harder to be cured than a tertian, or a consumption of the lungs than a little distillation of rheum upon the throat; by so much is it harder to prevail upon a triumphing lust than upon its first insinuations. But the ways of resisting are of a different consideration, proportionably to the nature of the crimes.

27. First, if the temptation be to crimes of pleasure and sensuality, let the resistance be by flight; for in case of lust, even to consider the arguments against it is half as great temptation as to press the arguments for it. For all considerations of such allurements make the soul perceive something of its relish, and entertain the fancy. Even the pulling pitch from our clothes defiles the fingers; and some adherences of pleasant and carnal sins will be remanent even from those considerations which stay within the circuit of the flames, though but with purpose to quench the fire and preserve the house. Chastity cannot suffer the least thought of the approaches of the spirit of impurity; and it is necessary to all that will keep their purity and innocence against sensual temptations, to avoid every thing that may prejudice decorum. Libanius the sophister reports, that a painter being one day desirous to paint Apollo upon a laurel board, the colours would not stick, but were rejected; out of which his fancy found out this extraction; that the chaste Daphne (concerning whom the poets feign that, flying from Apollo, who attempted to ravish her, she was turned into a laurel tree, could not endure him even in painting, and rejected him after the loss of her sensitive powers. And indeed chaste souls do, even to death, resent the least image and offer of impurity; whatsoever is like a sin of uncleanness, he that means to preserve himself chaste, must

avoid, as he would avoid the sin ; in this case there being no difference but of degrees between the inward temptation and the crime.

28 Secondly, if the temptation be to crimes of troublesome and preternatural desires, or of an intellectual nature, let the resistance be made *conserta manu*, by a perfect fight, by the amassing of such arguments in general, and remedies in particular, which are apt to become deleteries to the sin, and to abate the temptation. But in both these instances, the resistance must at least be as soon as the attempt is, lest the violence of the temptation outrun our powers ; for if against our full strength it hath prevailed to the first degrees, its progress to a complete victory is not so improbable as were its successes at the *first* beginnings. But to serve this and all other ends in the resisting and subduing a temptation, these following considerations have the best and most universal influence.

29. First, consideration of the presence of God, who is witness of all our actions, and a revenger of all impiety. This is so great an instrument of fear and religion, that whoever does actually consider God to be present, and considers what the first consideration signifies, either must be restrained from the present temptation, or must have thrown off all the possibilities and aptnesses for virtue ; such as modesty, and reverence, and holy fear. For if the face of a man scatters all base machinations, and we dare not act our crimes in the theatre, unless we be impudent as well as criminal ; much more does the sense of a present deity fill the places of our heart with veneration and the awe of religion, when it is thoroughly apprehended and actually considered. We see not God, he is not in our thoughts, when we run into darkness to act our impurities. For we dare not commit adultery if a boy be present ; behold the boy is sent off with an excuse, and God abides there, but yet we commit the

crime : it is because, as Jacob said at Bethel, “ God was in that place, and we knew not of it ;” and yet we neither breathe nor move an artery but in him and by his assistance ; “ In him we live, and move, and have our being.” And, “ All things are naked and open in his sight.” “ The iniquity of my people is very great ; for they say, The Lord seeth not.” “ Shall not he that made the eye see ?” “ To him the night and day are both alike.” These and many more to the same design are the voices of Scripture, that our spirits may retire into the beholding of God, for the purposes of fear and holiness, on whom, by the necessities of nature, and the condition of our essence, are wholly dependent ; and then only we may sin securely, when we can contrive to do it so that God may not *see* us !

30. There are many men who are servants of the eyes, as the apostle’s phrase is, who when they are looked on, act virtue with much pompousness and theatrical bravery ; but these men, when the theatre is empty, put off their upper garment, and retire into their primitive baseness. Diogenes endured the extremity of winter’s cold, that the people might wonder at his austerity and philosophical patience : but Plato seeing the people admiring the man, and pitying the sufferance, told them, that the way to make him warm himself was, for them to be gone and to take no notice of him. For they that walk as in the sight of men, serve that design well enough, when they fill the public voice with noises and opinions, and are not by their purposes engaged to act in private ; but they who are servants of the eyes of God, and walk as in the divine presence, perceive the same restraints in darkness, and closets, and grots, as in the light and midst of theatres ; and that consideration imposes upon us a happy necessity of doing virtuously, which presents us placed in the eyes of our judge. And therefore it was not unhandsomely said by a Jewish doctor, “ If

every man would consider God to be the great eye of the world watching perpetually over all our actions, and that his hand is indefatigable, and his ear ever open, possibly sin might be extirpated from off the face of the earth." And this is the condition of beatitude; and the blessed souls within their regions of light and felicity cannot sin, because in the vision beatifical, they always behold the face of God: and those who partake of this state by way of consideration, which is essential to the condition of the blessed, and apply it to practice and discourse, in proportion to this, shall retain innocence and a part of glory.

31. For it is a great declension of human reason, and a disreputation to our spirits, that we are so wholly led by sense, that we will not walk in the regions of the Spirit, and behold God by our eyes of faith and discourse, and thus suffer our course of life to be guided by such principles which distinguish our natures from beasts, and our condition from the vicious, and our spirits from the world, and our hopes from the common satisfactions of sense and corruption. The better half of our nature is of the same constitution with that of angels; and, therefore, although we are drenched in matter and the communications of earth, yet our better part was designed to converse with God; and we had, besides the eye of reason, another eye of faith put into our souls, and both clarified with revelations and demonstrations of the Spirit, expressing to us such visible and clear characters of God's presence, that the expression of the same Spirit is, we may feel him, for he is within us, and about us, and we are in him: in the comprehensions of his embracings, as birds in the air, or infants in the wombs of their pregnant mothers. And that God is pleased not to communicate himself to the eyes of our body, but still to remain invisible, besides that it is his own glory and perfection, it is also no more to us but like a retreat behind a

curtain, where, when we know our judge stands as a watch over our actions, we shall be sottish if we dare to provoke his jealousy, because we see him not, when we know that he is close by, though behind the cloud.

32. There are some general impressions upon our spirits, which by way of presumption and custom possess our persuasions, and make restraint upon us to excellent purposes; such are the religion of holy places, reverence of our parents, presence of an austere, an honourable, or a virtuous person. For many sins are prevented by the company of a *witness*, especially if besides the ties of modesty we have also towards him an endearment of reverence and fair opinion; and if he were with us in our privacies, he would cause our retirements to be more holy. St. Ambrose reports of the Virgin Mary, that she had so much piety and religion in her countenance and deportment, that divers persons, moved by the veneration and regard of her person, in her presence have first commenced their resolutions of chastity and sober living. However the story be, her person certainly was of so express and great devotion and sanctity, that he must needs have been of a very impudent disposition and firm immodesty, who durst have spoken unhandsome language in the presence of so rare a person. And why, then, any rudeness in the presence of God, if that were as certainly believed and realized? For whatsoever amongst men can be a restraint of vice or an endearment of virtue, all this is highly verified in the presence of God, to whom our conscience in its very concealments is as a fair table written in capital letters by his own finger; and then if we fail of the advantage of this exercise, it must proceed either from our dishonourable opinion of God, or from our own fearless inadvertency, or from a direct spirit of reprobation: for it is certain, that this consideration is in its own nature apt to correct our manners, to produce the fear of God, and

humility, and spiritual and holy thoughts, and the knowledge of God and of ourselves, and the consequents of all these, holy walking, and holy comforts. And by this single argument St. Paphnutius and St. Ephrem are reported in church story to have converted two harlots from a course of dissolution, to great sanctity and austerity.

33. But then this presence of God must not be a mere speculation of the understanding, though, so only, it is of very great benefit and immediate efficacy; yet it must reflect as well from the will as from discourse; and then only we walk in the presence of God, when by faith we behold him present, when we speak to him in frequent and holy prayers, when we beg aid from him in all our needs, and ask counsel of him in all our doubts, and before him bewail our sins, and tremble at his presence. This is an entire exercise of religion. And beside that, the presence of God serves to all this, it hath also special influence in the defeat of temptations, because it hath in it many things contrariant to the nature and efficacy of temptations; such as consideration, reverence, spiritual thoughts, and the fear of God; for wherever this realization is actual, there either God is highly despised, or certainly feared. In this case we are made to declare; for our purposes are concealed only in an incuriousness and inconsideration; but whoever considers God as present, will, in all reason, be as religious as in a temple, the reverence of which place, custom or religion hath imprinted in the spirits of most men; so that as Ahasuerus said of Haman, "Will he ravish the queen in my own house?" aggravating the crime by the incivility of the circumstance; God may well say to us, whose religion compels us to believe God every where present; for, since the divine presence hath made all places holy, and every place hath a *numen* in it, even the eternal God, we unhallow the place, and desecrate the ground whereon

we stand, (supported by the arm of God, placed in his heart, and enlightened by his eye), when we sin in so sacred a presence.

34. The second great instrument against temptation is meditation of death. Raderus reports, that a certain person, to restrain the inordination of intemperate desires, which were like thorns in his flesh, and disturbed his spiritual peace, shut himself up in a sepulchre, and for twelve years dwelt in that scene of death. It were good we did so too, making tombs and coffins presential to us by frequent meditation. For God hath given us all a definite arrest in Adam, and from it there lies no appeal, but it is infallibly and unalterably appointed for all men once to die, or to be changed, to pass from hence to a condition of eternity, good or bad. Now because this law is certain, and the time and the manner of its execution uncertain, and on this moment eternity depends, and that after this life the final sentence is irrevocable, that all the pleasures here are sudden, transient, and unsatisfying, and vain; he must needs be a fool that knows not to distinguish moments from *eternity*; and since it is a condition of necessity, established by divine decrees, and fixed by the indispensable laws of nature, that we shall after a very little duration pass on to a condition strange, not understood, then unalterable, and yet of great mutation from this, even of greater distance from that in which we are here, than this is from the state of beasts; this, when it is considered, must in all reason make the same impression upon our understandings and affections which naturally all strange things and all great considerations are apt to do; that is, create resolutions and results passing through the heart of man, such as are reasonable and prudent, in order to our own felicities, that we neglect the vanities of the present temptation, and secure our future condition, which will, till eternity itself expires, remain such as we make

it to be, by our deportment in this short transition and passage through the world.

35. And that this discourse is reasonable I am therefore confirmed, because I find it to be to the same purpose used by the Spirit of God, and the wisest personages in the world. "My soul is always in my hand, therefore do I keep thy commandments," said David: he looked upon himself as a dying person; and that, restrained all his inordinations, and so he prayed, "Lord, teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom." And therefore the Egyptians used to serve up a skeleton to their feasts, that the dissolutions and vapours of wine might be restrained with that bunch of myrrh, and the vanities of their eyes chastised by that sad object; for they thought it unlikely a man should be transported far with any thing low or vicious, that looked long and often into the hollow eye-pits of a death's head, or dwelt in a charnel-house. And such considerations do make all the importunity and violence of sensual desires to disband. For when a man stands perpetually at the door of eternity, and, as did John the Almoner, every day building his sepulchre, and every night one day of our life is gone and passed into the possession of death, it will concern us to take care that the door leading to hell do not open upon us, that we be not crushed to ruin by the stones of our grave, and that our death become not a consignment to us to a sad eternity. For all the pleasures of the whole world, and in all its duration, cannot make recompense for one hour's torment in hell; and yet, if wicked persons were to sit in hell for ever without any change of posture, or variety of torment beyond that session, it were insufferable beyond the endurance of nature; and, therefore, where little less than infinite misery, in an infinite duration, shall punish the pleasures of sudden and transient crimes, the gain of pleasure and the exchange of banks here for a condition of eternal

and miserable death, is a permutation fit to be made by none but fools and desperate persons, who make no use of a reasonable soul, but that that they, in their perishing, might be convinced of unreasonableness, and die by their own fault.

36. The use that wise men have made when they reduced this consideration to practice is, to believe every day to be the *last* of their life, for so it may be, and for ought we know it will; and then think what you would avoid, or what you would do, if you were dying, or were to day to suffer death by sentence and conviction; and *that*, in all reason, and in proportion to the strength of your consideration, you will do every day. For that is the sublimity of wisdom, to do those things living, which are to be desired and chosen by dying persons. An alarm of death every day renewed, and pressed earnestly, will watch a man so tame and soft, that the precepts of religion will dwell deep in his spirit. But they that make a covenant with the grave, and put the evil day far from them, they are the men that eat spiders and toads for meat greedily, and a temptation to them is as welcome as joy; and they seldom dispute the point in behalf of piety or mortification: for they that look upon death at distance, apprehend it not; but in such general lines and great representations that describe it only as future and possible; but nothing of its terrors or affrightments or circumstances of advantage are discernible by such an eye as disturbs its sight and discomposes the posture, that the object may seem another thing than what it is truly and really. St. Austin, with his mother Monica, was led one day by a Roman prator to see the tomb of Cæsar. Himself thus describes the corpse. "It looked of a blue mould, the bone of the nose laid bare, the flesh of the nether lip quite fallen off, his mouth full of worms, and in his eye-pits two hungry toads feasting upon the remaining portion of flesh

and moisture ; and so he dwelt in his house of darkness." And if every person tempted by an opportunity of lust or intemperance, would choose such a room for his privacy, such company for his witness, such an object to allay his appetite, he would soon find his spirit more sober, and his desires obedient. I end this with the counsel of St. Bernard, "Let every man in the first address to his actions consider, whether if he were now to die he might safely and prudently do such an act, and whether he would not be infinitely troubled that death should surprise him in the present dispositions ; and then let him proceed accordingly." For since our treasure is in earthen vessels, which may be broken in pieces by the collision of ten thousand accidents, it were not safe to treasure up "*urath*" in them ; for if we do, we shall certainly *drink* it in the day of recompense.

37. Thirdly, before, and in, and after, all this the blessed Jesus propounds prayer as a remedy against temptations ; "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." For besides that, prayer is the great instrument of obtaining victory by the grace of God, as a fruit of our desires and of God's natural and essential goodness, the very praying against a temptation, if it be hearty, fervent, and devout, is a denying of it, and part of the victory ; for it is a disclaiming the entertainment of it, it is a positive rejection of the crime ; and every consent to it is a *ceasing* to pray, and to desire remedy. And we shall observe that whensoever we begin to listen to the whispers of a tempting spirit, our prayers against it lessen, as the consent increases ; there being nothing a more direct enemy to the temptation than prayer, which as it is of itself a professed hostility against the crime, so it is a calling in auxiliaries from above to make the victory more certain. If temptation sets upon thee, do thou set upon God ; for he is as soon overcome as thou art, as soon moved to good as thou art to evil ; he

is as quickly invited to pity thee, as thou to ask him, provided thou dost not finally rest in the petition, but pass into action, and endeavour by all means human and moral, to quench the flame newly kindled in thy breast, before it come to devour the marrow of thy bones. For a strong prayer, and a lazy, incurious, unobservant walking, are contradictions in the discourses of religion. Ruffinus tells us a story of a young man solicited by the spirit of uncleanness, who came to an old religious person, and begged his prayers. It was in that age when God used to answer prayers of very holy persons, by more clear and familiar significations of his pleasure than he knows now to be necessary. But after many earnest prayers sent up to the throne of grace, and the young man not at all bettered, upon consideration and inquiry of particulars, he found the cause to be, because the young man relied so upon the prayers of the old eremite, that he did nothing at all to discountenance his lust or contradict the temptation. But then he took another course, enjoined him austerities and exercises of devotion, gave him rules of prudence and caution, tied him to work and to stand upon his guard ; and then the prayers returned in triumph, and the young man trampled upon his lust. And so shall I and you, by God's grace, if we pray earnestly and frequently, if we watch carefully that we be not surprised, if we be not idle in secret, nor talkative in public ; if we read Scriptures, and consult with a spiritual guide, and make religion to be our work ; that serving of God be the business of our life, and our designs be to prepare for eternity ; then we shall walk safely or recover speedily, and, by doing advantages to piety, secure a greatness of religion and spirituality to our spirits and understanding. But remember, that although when Israel fought against Amalek, Moses' prayer and Moses' hand secured the victory, his prayer grew ineffectual when his hands were

slack ; to demonstrate to us, that we must co-operate with the grace of God, praying devoutly, and watching carefully, and observing prudently, and labouring with diligence and assiduity.

THE PRAYER.

Eternal God and most merciful Father, I adore thy wisdom, providence, and admirable dispensation of affairs in the spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus : that thou, who art infinitely good, dost permit so many sadnesses and dangers to discompose that order of things and spirits which thou didst create innocent and harmless, and design to great and spiritual perfections : that the emanation of good from evil by thy overruling power and excellences may force glory to thee from our shame, and honour to thy wisdom by these contradictory accidents and events. Lord, have pity upon me in these sad disorders, and with mercy know my infirmities. Let me, by suffering what thou pleasest, co-operate to the glorification of thy grace and magnifying of thy mercy : but never let me consent to sin ; but with the power of thy majesty, and mightiness of thy prevailing mercy, rescue me from those throgs of dangers and enemies, which daily seek to deflower that innocence with which thou didst clothe my soul in the new birth. Behold, O God, how all the spirits of darkness endeavour the extinction of our hopes, and the dispersion of all those graces, and the prevention of all those glories, which the holy Jesus hath purchased for every loving and obedient soul. Our very meat and drink are full of poison, our senses are snares, our business is various temptation, our sins are inlets to more, and our good actions made occasions of sins. Lord, deliver

me from the malice of the devil, from the fallacies of the world, from my own folly ; that I be not devoured by the first, nor cheated by the second, nor betrayed by myself ; but let thy grace, which is sufficient for me, be always present with me : let thy Spirit instruct me in the spiritual warfare, arming my understanding, and securing my will, and fortifying my spirit with resolutions of piety, and incentives of religion, and deleteries of sin : that the dangers I am encompassed withal may become unto me an occasion of victory and triumph, through the aids of the Holy Ghost, and by the cross of the Lord Jesus, who hath for himself and all his servants triumphed over sin, and hell, and the grave, even all the powers of darkness ; from which, by the mercies of Jesus, and the merits of his passion, now and ever deliver me and all thy faithful people. Amen.

DISCOURSE VI.

Of Baptism.

1. WHEN the holy Jesus was to begin his prophetic office, and to lay the foundation of his church on the corner stone of his priesthood, he first tempered the cement with water, and then with blood, and afterwards built it up by the hands of the Spirit. Himself entered at that door, by which his disciples for ever after were to follow him ; for therefore he went in at the door of baptism, that he might hallow the entrance which himself made to the house he was now building.

2. As it was in the old, so it is in the new creation ; out of the waters, God produced every living creature ; and when at first the Spirit moved upon the waters, and gave life, it was

the type of what was designed in the renovation. Every thing that lives now is born of water and the Spirit ; and Christ, who is our Creator and Redeemer in the new birth, opened the fountains and hallowed the stream. Christ, who is our life, went down into the waters of baptism ; and we, who descend thither, find the effects of life ; it is living water, of which whoso drinks needs not to drink of it again, for it shall be in him a well of water springing up to life eternal.

3. But because every thing is resolved into the same principles from whence it is taken, the old world, which by the power of God came from the waters, by its own sin fell into the waters again, and were all drowned, and only eight persons were saved by an ark ; and the world, renewed upon the stock and reserves of that mercy, consigned the sacrament of baptism in another figure ; for then God gave his sign from heaven, that by water the world should never again perish ; but he meant that they should be saved by water ; for baptism, which is a figure like to this, doth also now save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

4. After this, the Jews report, that the world took up the doctrine of baptisms, in remembrance, that the iniquity of the old world was purged by water ; and they washed all that came to the service of the true God, and by that baptism bound them to the observation of the precepts which God gave to Noah.

5. But when God separated a family for his own special service, he gave them a sacrament of initiation ; but it was a sacrament of blood, the covenant of circumcision ; and this was the forerunner of baptism, but not a type ; when that was abrogated, *this* came into the place of it, and *that* consigned the same faith which this professes. But it could not properly be a type, whose nature is, by a likeness of matter or ceremony, to represent the same mystery. Neither is a ceremony, as baptism truly is,

properly capable of having a type ; itself is but a type of a greater mysteriousness. And the nature of types is, in shadow, to describe by dark lines a future substance ; so that although circumcision might be a type of the effects and graces bestowed in baptism, yet of the baptism or ablution itself, it cannot be properly ; because of the unlikeness of the symbols and configurations, and because they are both equally distant from substances, which types are to consign and represent. The first bishops of Jerusalem and all the Christian Jews, for many years, retained circumcision together with baptism ; and Christ himself, who was circumcised, was also baptized ; and therefore it is not so proper to call circumcision a type of baptism ; it was rather a seal and sign of the same covenant, to Abraham and the fathers and to all Israel, as baptism is to all ages of the christian church.

6. And because this rite could not be administered to all persons, and was not at all times after its institution, God was pleased by a proper and specific type to consign this rite of baptism, which he intended to all, and that for ever ; and God, when the family of his church grew separate, notorious, numerous, and distinct, sent them into their own country by a baptism through which the whole nation passed ; for “ all the fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea ;” so, by a double figure, foretelling, that as they were initiated to Moses’ law by the cloud above and the sea beneath, so should all the persons of the church, men, women, and children, be initiated unto Christ by the Spirit from above and the water below : for it was the design of the apostle in that discourse, to represent that the fathers and we were equal, as to the privileges of the covenant ; he proved that we do not exceed them, and it ought therefore to be certain that *they* do not exceed us, nor their *children* ours.

7. But after this, something was to remain which might not only consign the covenant which God made with Abraham, but be as a passage, from the fathers through the synagogue to the church, from Abraham by Moses to Christ; and that was circumcision, which was a rite which God chose to be a mark to the posterity of Abraham, to distinguish them from the nations which were not within the covenant of grace; and to be a seal of the righteousness of faith, which God made to be the spirit and life of the covenant.

8. But because circumcision, although it was ministered to all the males, yet it was not to the females, although they and all the nation were baptized and initiated into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; therefore the children of Israel in imitation of the patriarchs, (the posterity of Noah,) used also ceremonial baptisms to their women and to their proselytes, and to all that were circumcised. And the Jews say, that Sarah and Rebecca, when they were adopted into the family of the church, (that is, of Abraham and Isaac,) were baptized; and so were all strangers that were married to the sons of Israel. And that we may deem this to be typical of christian baptism, the doctors of the Jews had a tradition, that when the Messiah would come, there should be so many proselytes, that they could not be circumcised, but should be baptized. The tradition proved true, but not for their reason.

But that this rite of admitting into mysteries, and institutions, and offices of religion, by baptisms, was used by the posterity of Noah, or at least very early among the Jews, besides the testimonies of their own doctors, I am the rather induced to believe, because the heathens had the same rite in many places and in several religions; so they initiated disciples into the secrets of Mithra; and the priests of Cottyto were called Baptæ, because by baptism they were admitted into the religion; and they

thought murder, incest, rapes, and the worst of crimes, were purged by dipping in the sea or fresh springs; and a proselyte is called in Arrianus, a baptized person.

9. But this ceremony of baptizing was so certain and usual among the Jews, in admitting proselytes and adopting into institutions, that to baptize and to make disciples are all one: and when John the Baptist, by an order from heaven, went to prepare the way for the coming of our blessed Lord, he preached repentance, and baptized all that professed repentance. He taught the Jews to live good lives, and baptized with the baptism of a prophet; such as was not unusually done by extraordinary and holy persons in the change or renewing of discipline or religion. Whether John's baptism was from heaven, or of men, Christ asked the Pharisees. That it was from heaven, the people believed, because he was a prophet and a holy person; but it implies also, that such baptisms are sometimes from men; that is, used by persons of an eminent religion, or extraordinary fame for the gathering of disciples and admitting proselytes; and the disciples of Christ did so too; even before Christ had instituted the sacrament for the christian church, the disciples that came to Christ were baptized by his apostles.

10. And now we are come to the gates of baptism. All these, till John, were but types and preparatory baptisms, and John's baptism was but the prologue to the baptism of Christ. The Jewish baptisms admitted proselytes to Moses and to the law of ceremonies; John's baptism called them to believe in the Messiah now appearing, and to repent of their sins, to enter into the kingdom which was now at hand, and preached that repentance which should be for the remission of sins. His baptism remitted no sins, but preached and consigned repentance, which, in the belief of the Messiah, whom he pointed to, should pardon sins. But because

he was taken from his office before the work was completed, the disciples of Christ finished it. They went forth preaching the same sermon of repentance, and the approach of the kingdom, and baptized, or made proselytes or disciples, as John did; only they, (as it is probable) baptized in the name of Jesus, which it is not so likely John did. And this very thing might be the cause of the different forms of baptism recorded in the Acts, of baptizing in the name of Jesus, and at other times in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the former being the manner of doing it in pursuance of the design of John's baptism, and the latter the form of institution by Christ for the whole christian church, appointed after his resurrection: the disciples at first using promiscuously what was used by the same authority, though with some difference of mystery.

11. The holy Jesus having found his way ready prepared by the preaching of John and by his baptism, and as the Jewish manner of adopting proselytes and disciples into the religion was a way chalked out for him to initiate disciples into his religion, took what was so prepared, and changed it into a perpetual sacrament. He kept the ceremony, that they who were led only by outward things might be the better called in and easier enticed into the religion, when they entered by a ceremony which their nation always used in the like cases; and, therefore, without change of the outward act, he put into it a new spirit, and gave it a new grace and a proper efficacy; he sublimed it to higher ends, and adorned it with stars of heaven; he made it to signify greater mysteries, to convey greater blessings, to consign better promises; to cleanse deeper than the skin, and to carry proselytes farther than the gates of the institution. For so he was pleased to do in the other sacrament: he took the ceremony which he found ready in the custom of the Jews, where the *major domo* after the paschal supper

gave bread and wine to every person of his family; he changed nothing of it *without*, but transferred the rite to greater mysteries, and put his own spirit to their sign, and it became a sacrament evangelical. It was so also in the matter of excommunication, where the Jewish practice was made to pass into christian discipline; thus without violence and noise, old things became new, while he fulfilled the law, making it up in full measures of the Spirit.

12. By these steps, baptism passed on to be a divine evangelical institution, which we find to be consigned by three evangelists: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It was one of the last commandments the holy Jesus gave upon the earth, when he taught his apostles the things which concerned his kingdom. "For he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but, unless a man be born of water and the holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven:" agreeably to the decretory words of God by Abraham in the circumcision, to which baptism succeeds in the consignation of the same covenant and the same spiritual promises, "The uncircumcised child whose flesh is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant. The Manichees, Seleucus, Hermias, and their followers, (people of a day's abode and small interest, but of malicious doctrine,) taught baptism not to be necessary, not to be used; upon this ground, because they supposed that it was proper to John to baptize with water, and reserved for Christ, as his peculiar, to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Indeed Christ baptized not otherwise; he sent his Spirit upon the church at Pentecost and baptized them with fire; the Spirit appearing like a flame; but he appointed his apostles to baptize with water, and they did so, and their successors after them, every where and for ever;

not expounding, but obeying, the preceptive words of their Lord, which were almost the last that he spake upon earth. And I cannot think it needful to prove this to be necessary by any more arguments; for the words are so plain that they need no exposition; and yet if they had been obscure, the universal practice of the apostles and the church for ever is a sufficient declaration of the commandment. No tradition

is more universal, no not of Scripture itself: no words are plainer, no not the ten commandments; and if any suspicion can be superinduced by any jealous or less discerning person. it will need no other refutation, but to turn his eyes to those lights by which he himself sees Scripture to be the word of God, and the commandments to be the declaration of his will.

SECTION X.

OF THE FIRST MANIFESTATION OF JESUS, BY THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN, AND A MIRACLE.

1. AFTER that, the Baptist by a sign from heaven was confirmed in spirit, and understanding that Jesus was the Messiah, he immediately published to the Jews what God had manifested to him; and first to the priests and Levites, sent in legation from the sanhedrim, he professed indefinitely, in answer to their question, that himself was not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet whom they, by a special tradition, did expect to be revealed they knew not when. And concerning himself definitely he said nothing, but that he was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord." He it was who was then amongst them, but not known, a person of great dignity, to whom the Baptist was not worthy to do the office of the lowest ministry, who coming after John was preferred far before him, who was to increase, and the Baptist was to decrease, who did baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

2. This was the character of his personal prerogatives; but as yet no demonstration was made of his person, till after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Jesus, and then whenever the Baptist saw Jesus, he pointed him out with his finger, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world: this is he." Then he shews him to Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, with the same designation, and to another disciple with him, who both followed Jesus, and abode with him all night; Andrew brings his brother Simon with him, and then Christ changes his name from Simon to Peter, or Cephas, which signifies a stone. Then Jesus

himself finds out Philip of Bethsaida, and bade him follow him; and Philip finds out Nathaniel, and calls him to see. Thus persons bred in a dark cell, upon their first ascent up to the chambers of light, all run staring upon the beauties of the sun, and call the partners of their darkness to communicate in their new and strange revelation.

3. When Nathaniel was come to Jesus, Christ saw his heart, and gave him a testimony to be truly honest, and full of holy simplicity, a true Israelite without guile. And Nathaniel, being overjoyed that he had found the Messiah, believing out of love, and loving by reason of his joy, took that for a proof and verification of his person, which was very insufficient to confirm a doubt, or ratify a probability. But so we believe a story which we love; taking probabilities for demonstrations, and casual accidents for probabilities, and any thing creates vehement presumptions; in which cases our guides are not our *knowing* faculties, but our affections; and if they be holy, God guides them into the right persuasions, as he does little birds to make rare nests, though they understand not the mystery of operation, nor the design and purpose of the action.

4. But Jesus took his will and forwardness of affections in so good part, that he promised him greater things; and this gave occasion to the first prophecy which was made by Jesus. For "Jesus said unto him, Because I said I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these;" and then he prophesied that he should see

“heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” But, being a doctor of the law, Christ chose him not at all to the college of apostles.*

5. Much about the same time there happened to be a marriage in Cana of Galilee, in the vicinage of his dwelling, where John the Evangelist is by some supposed to have been the bridegroom; (but of this there is no certainty;) and thither Jesus being with his mother invited, he went to do civility to the persons espoused, and to do honour to the holy rite of marriage. The persons then married were but of indifferent fortunes, richer in love of neighbours than in the fulness of rich possessions; they had more company than wine. For the master of the feast (whom, according to the order and piety of the nation, they chose from the order of priests to be the president of the feast, by the reverence of his person to restrain all inordination, by his discretion to govern and order the circumstances, by his religious knowledge to direct the solemnities of marriage, and to retain all the persons and actions in the bounds of prudence and modesty) complained to the bridegroom that the guests wanted wine.

6. As soon as the holy virgin mother had notice of the want, out of charity, (that uses to be employed in supplying even the minutest and smallest articles of necessity, as well as the clamorous importunity of extremities and great indigences,) she complained to her Son by an indefinite address; not desiring him to make supply, for she knew not how he should; but either out of an habitual commiseration she complained without hoping for remedy, or else she looked on him who was a fountain of holiness and of plenty, as expecting something from him either of discourses or miracles. But “Jesus answered her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.” By

this answer intending no denial to the purpose of his mother’s intimation, to whom he always bore a religious and pious reverence; but to signify that he was not yet entered into his period and years of miracles; and when he did, it must be not for respect of kindred or civil relations, but as it is a derivation of power from above, so it must be in pursuit of that service and design which he had received in charge together with his power.

7. And so his mother understood him, giving express charge to the ministers to do whatsoever he commanded. Jesus therefore bade them fill the water-pots which stood there for the use of frequent washings, which the Jews did use in all public meetings, for fear of touching pollutions, or contracting legal impurities: which they did with a curiousness next to superstition, washing the very beds and tables used at their feasts. The servants filled them to the brim, and, as they were commanded, drew out, and bare unto the governor of the feast, who knew not of it, till the miracle grew public, and like light shewed itself; for while they wondered at the economy of that feast, in keeping the best wine till the last, it grew apparent that he who was the Lord of the creatures, who in their first seeds have an obediential capacity to receive the impresses of what forms he pleases to imprint, could give new natures, and produce new qualities in that subject in which he chooses to glorify his Son.

8. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee. For all those miracles which are reported to be done by Christ in his infancy, and during interval of his younger years, are apocryphal and spurious, feigned by trifling understandings, (who think to serve God with a well meant lie,) and promoted by the credulity of persons, in whose hearts easiness, folly, and credulity are bound up, and tied fast with silken thread and easy softnesses of religious affections, not made severe by the rigours of wisdom and

* This is doubtful. See the Note on this question, at the close of the Section.-- Ev.

experience. This first miracle manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him

Reflections touching the Vocation of five Disciples, and of the first Miracle of Jesus, done at Cana in Galilee.

1. As soon as ever John the Baptist was taught by the descent of the Holy Spirit that this was Jesus, he instantly preached him to all that came near him. For the Holy Ghost was his commission and instruction; and now he was a minister evangelical, and taught all those that have the honour to be servants in so sacred employment, that they must not go till they be sent, nor speak till they be instructed, nor yet hold their peace when their commission is signed by the consignation of the Spirit in ordinary ministry. For all power and all wisdom is from above, and in spiritual ministrations is a direct emanation from the holy Spirit; that as no man is fit to speak the mysteries of godliness, be his person never so holy, unless he derive wisdom in order to such ministries; so be he never so instructed by the assistance of art or infused knowledge, yet unless he also have derived power as well as skill, authority as well as knowledge, from the same Spirit, he is not warranted to minister in public even in ordinary ministrations. The Baptist was sent by a prime designation to prepare the way to Jesus, and was instructed by the same Spirit, which had sanctified or consecrated him in his mother's womb to this holy purpose.

2. When the Baptist had shewed Jesus to Andrew and another disciple, they immediately followed him with the distances and fears of the first approach, and the infirmities of new converts; but Jesus seeing them follow their *first light*, invited them to see the sun; for God loves to cherish infants in grace, and having

sown the immortal seed in their hearts, if it takes root downwards, and springs out into the verdure of a leaf, he still waters it with the gentle rain of the holy Spirit, in graces and new assistances, till it brings forth the fruits of a holy conversation. And God, who knows that infants have need of pleasant, and gentle, and frequent nutriment, hath given to them this comfort, that himself will take care of their first beginnings, and improve them to the strength of men, and give them the strength of nature, and the wisdom of the Spirit, which ennoble men to excellences and perfections. By the preaching of the Baptist they were brought to seek for Christ, and when they did, Christ found them, and brought them home, and made them stay all night with him; which was more favour than they looked for. For so God usually dispenses his mercies, that they may run over all our thoughts and expectations, and they are given in no proportion to us, but according to God's measures; he considering not what we are worthy of, but what is fit for him to give; he only requiring of us capacities to receive his favour, and fair reception and entertainment of his graces.

3. When Andrew had found Jesus, he calls his brother Simon to be partaker of his joys, which (as it happens in accidents of greatest pleasure) cannot be contained within the limits of the possessor's thoughts. But this calling of Peter was not to a beholding, but to a participation of his felicities; for he is strangely covetous who would enjoy the sun, or the air, or the sea, alone; here was treasure for him and all the world; and by lighting his brother Simon's taper, he made his own light the greater and more glorious. And this is the nature of grace, to be diffusive of its own excellences: for here no envy can inhabit: the proper and personal ends of holy persons in the contract and transmissions of grace are increased, by the participation and communion of others.

For our prayers are more effectual, our aids increased, our encouragement and examples more prevalent, God more honoured, and the rewards of glory have accidental advantages, by the superaddition of every new saint and beatified person; the members of the mystical body, when they have received nutriment from God and his holy Son, supply to each other the same which themselves received, and live on, in the communion of saints. Every new star gilds the firmament, and increases its first glories; and those who are instruments of the conversion of others, shall not only introduce new beauties, but when themselves shine like the stars in glory, they shall have some reflections from the light of others, to whose fixing in the orb of heaven they have been instrumental. And this consideration is not only of use in the exaltations of the dignity apostolical and clerical, but for the enkindling even of their private charities; who may strive to promote others interests of piety, in which themselves have much concernment.

4. These disciples asked of Christ where he dwelt; "Jésus answered. Come and see." It was an answer very expressive of our duty in this instance. It is not enough for us to understand where Christ inhabits, or where he is to be found; for our understandings may follow him afar off, and we receive no satisfaction unless it be to curiosity; but we must go where he is, eat of his meat, wash in his lavatory, rest on his beds, and dwell with him; for the holy Jesus hath no kind influence upon those who stand at a distance, save only the affections of a loadstone, apt to draw them nigher, that he may transmit his virtues by union and confederations; but if they persist in a sullen distance, they shall learn his glories as Dives understood the peace of Lazarus, of which he was never to participate. Although "the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," yet he hath many houses where to convey his graces; he

hath nothing to cover his own, but he hath enough to sanctify ours; and as he dwelt in such houses which the charity of good people then afforded for his entertainment; so now he loves to abide in places which the religion of his servants hath vowed to his honour, and the advantages of evangelical ministrations. Thither we must come to him, or any where else where we may enjoy him. He is to be found in a church, in his ordinances, in the communion of saints, in every religious duty, in the heart of every holy person; and if we go to him by the addresses of religion in holy places, by the ministry of holy rites, by charity, by the adherences of faith, and hope, and other combining graces of union and society, or prepare a lodging for him within us, that he may come to us, then shall we see such glories and interior beauties, which none know but they that dwell with him. The secrets of spiritual benediction are understood only by them to whom they are conveyed, even by the children of his house. "Come and see."

5. St. Andrew was first called, and that by Christ immediately, his brother Simon next, and that by Andrew; but yet Jesus changed Simon's name, and not the other's; and by this change designed him to an eminency of office, at least in signification, above his brother, or else separately and distinctly from him; to shew that these graces and favours which do not immediately co-operate to eternal salvation, but are gifts and offices, or impresses of authority, are given to men irregularly, and without any order of predisposing causes, or probabilities on our part, but are issues of absolute predestination; and as they have efficacy from those reasons which God conceals, so they have some purposes as concealed as their causes; only if God pleases to make us vessels of fair employment and of great capacity, we shall bear a greater burthen, and are bound to glorify God with special offices. But as

these exterior and ineffective graces are given upon the same good will of God which made mere matter to be a human body, when, if God had so pleased, it was as capable of being made a fungus or a sponge; so they are given to us with the same intentions as are our souls, that we might glorify God in the distinct capacity of grace, as before of a reasonable nature. And besides that it teaches us to magnify God's free mercy, so it removes every such exalted person from being an object of envy to others, or from pleasing himself in vainer opinions; for God hath made him of such an employment, as freely and voluntarily as he hath made him a man, and he no more co-operated to this grace than to his own creation, and may as well admire himself for being born in Italy, or from rich parents, or for having two hands or two feet, as for having received such a designation extraordinary. But these things are never instruments of reputation among sound understandings, and never but in the sottish and unmanly apprehensions of the vulgar. Only this, when God hath imprinted an authority upon a person, although the man hath nothing to please himself withal but God's grace, yet others are to pay the duty which that impression demands; which duty, because it terminates upon God, and touches not the man, but as it passes through him to the fountain of authority and grace, it extinguishes all pretences of conceit and pride.

6. When Jesus espied Nathaniel (who also had been called by the first disciples) coming towards him, he gave him an excellent character, calling him a true Israelite in whom was no guile, and admitted him amongst the first disciples of the institution; by this character, in one of the first of his scholars, hallowing simplicity of spirit, and receiving it into his discipline, that it might now become a virtue and duty evangelical. For although it concerns us as a christian duty to be prudent, yet the

prudence of christianity is a duty of spiritual effect, and in instances of religion with no other purposes than to avoid giving offence to those that are without and within; that we cause no disrepute to christianity; that we do nothing that may encourage enemies to religion; and that those that are within the communion and obedience of the church, may not suffer as great inconveniences by the indiscreet conduct of religious actions as by direct temptations to a sin. These are the purposes of private prudence, to which in a greater measure and upon more variety of rules the governors of churches are obligated. But that which christian simplicity prohibits, is, the mixing arts and unhandsome means for the purchase of our ends; witty counsels that are underminings of our neighbour, destroying his just interest to serve our own, stratagems to deceive, indefinite and insignificant answers with fraudulent design, unjust and unlawful concealment of our purposes, fallacious promises and false pretences, flattery and unjust and unreasonable praise, saying one thing and meaning the contrary, pretending religion to secular designs, breaking faith, taking false oaths, and such other instruments of human purposes are framed by the devil, and sent into the world to be perfected by man. Christian simplicity speaks nothing but its thoughts; and when it concerns prudence that a thought or purpose should be concealed, it concerns simplicity that silence be its cover, and not a false vizard; it rather suffers inconvenience than a lie; it destroys no man's right, though it be inconsistent with my advantages; it reproves freely, and palliates no man's wickedness; it intends what it ought, and does what is bidden, and uses courses regular and just; sneaks not in corners, and walks always in the eye of God and the face of the world.

7. Jesus told Nathaniel that he knew him, when he saw him under the fig-tree; and Nathaniel took that to be proof sufficient that

he was the Messiah, and believed rightly upon an insufficient motive, which, because Jesus did accept: it gives testimony to us, that however faith be produced, by means regular or by arguments incompetent, whether it be proved or not proved; whether by chance or deliberation, whether wisely or by occasion, so that faith be produced by the instrument, and *love* by faith, God's work is done; and so is ours. For if St. Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, though by the envy of peevish persons, certainly God will not reject an excellent product because it came from a weak and sickly parent; and he that brings good out of evil, and rejoices in that good, having first triumphed upon the evil, will certainly take delight in the faith of the most ignorant person, which his own grace hath produced out of innocent, though insufficient, beginnings. It was folly in Naaman to refuse to be cured, because he was to recover only by washing in Jordan. The more incompetent the means is, the greater is the glory of God, who hath produced waters from a rock, and fire from the collision of a sponge and wool; and it is certain, the end, unless it be in products merely natural, does not take its estimate and degrees from the external means. Grace does miracles, and the productions of the Spirit in respect of its instruments are equivocal, extraordinary, and supernatural; and ignorant persons believe as strongly, though they know not why, and love God as heartily, as greater spirits and more excellent understandings; and when God pleases, or if he sees it expedient, he will do to others as to Nathaniel, give them greater arguments and better instruments for the confirmation and heightening of their faith, than they had for the first production.

8. When Jesus had chosen these few disciples to be witnesses of succeeding events, every one of which was to be a proof of his mission and divinity, he entered into the theatre of the world at a marriage feast, which he now

first hallowed to a sacramental signification, and made to become mysterious; he now began to choose his spouse out from the communities of the world, and did mean to endear her by unions ineffable and glorious, and consign the sacrament by his blood, which he first gave in a secret representment, and afterwards in letter and apparent effusion. And although the holy Jesus did in his own person consecrate celibate, yet by his presence he also hallowed marriage, and made it honourable, not only in civil account and the rites of heraldry, but in a spiritual sense, he having new sublimed it by making it a sacramental representation of the union of Christ and his spouse the church. And all married persons do well to remember, what the conjugal society does represent, and not break the matrimonial bond, which is a mysterious ligament of Christ and his church; for whoever dissolves the sacredness of the mystery, and unhallows the vow by violence and impurity, he dissolves his relation to Christ. To break faith with a wife or husband is a divorce from Jesus, and that is a separation from all possibilities of felicity. In the time of the mosaical statutes, to violate marriage was to do injustice, and dishonour, and a breach, to the sanctions of nature, or the first constitutions. But two bands more are added in the gospel, to make marriage more sacred. For now our bodies are made temples of the Holy Ghost, and the rite of marriage is made significant and sacramental, and every act of adultery is profanation and irreligion, it desecrates a temple, and deflowers a mystery.

9. The married pair were holy, but poor, and they wanted wine, and the blessed virgin mother, pitying the blushes of the young man, complained to Jesus of the want; and Jesus gave her an answer which promised no satisfaction to her purposes. For now that Jesus had lived thirty years, and done, in person, nothing answerable to his glorious birth and the

miraculous accidents of his person, she longed till the time came in which he was to manifest himself by actions, as miraculous as the star of his birth. She knew by the rejecting of his trade, and his going abroad, and probably by his own discourse to her, that the time was near; and the forwardness of her love and holy desires possibly might go some minutes before his own precise limit. However Jesus answered to this purpose, to shew, that the work he was to do was done, not to satisfy her importunity, which is not occasion enough for a miracle, but to prosecute the great work of divine designation. For in works spiritual and religious, all exterior relation ceases. The world's order, and the manner of our nature, and the infirmities of our person, have produced societies, and they have been the parents of relation; and God hath tied them fast by the knots of duty, and made the duty the occasion and opportunities of reward. But in actions spiritual, in which we are related to God, our relations are founded upon the Spirit, and therefore we must do our duties upon considerations separate and spiritual, and never suffer temporal relations to impede our religious duties. Christian charity is a higher thing than to be confined within the terms of dependence and correlation: and those endearments which leagues, or nature, or society have made, pass into spiritual, and, like stars in the presence of the sun, appear not when the heights of the spirit are in place. Where duty hath prepared special instances, there we must for religion's sake, promote them; but even to our parents or our children the charities of religion ought to be greater than the affections of society. And though we are bound in all offices exterior to prefer our relatives before others, because that is made a duty, yet to purposes spiritual, all persons eminently holy put on the efficacy of the same relations, and pass a duty upon us of religious affections.

10. At the command of Jesus the water pots

were filled with water, and the water was by his divine power turned into wine; where the different economy of God and the world is highly observable. Every man sets forth good wine at first, and then the worse; but God not only turns the water into wine, but into such wine that the last draught is the most pleasant. The world presents us with fair language, promising hopes, convenient fortunes, pompous honours, and these are the outsides of the gilded pill; but when it is swallowed, these dissolve in the instant, and there remains bitterness, and the malignity of coloquintida. Every sin smiles in the first address, and carries light in the face, and honey in the lip; but when we have well drunk, then comes that which is worse, a whip with six strings, fears and terrors of conscience, and shame and displeasure, and a captive disposition, and diffidence in the day of death. But when, after the manner of the purifying of the christians we fill our waterpots with water, watering our couch with our tears, and moistening our cheeks with the perpetual distillations of repentance, then Christ turns our water into wine; first penitents, and then communicants; first waters of sorrow, and then the wine of the chalice; first the justifications of correction, and then the sanctifications of the sacrament, and the effects of the divine power, joy, and peace, and serenity, hopes full of confidence, and confidence without shame, and boldness without presumption; for Jesus keeps the best wine till the last; not only because of the direct reservation of the highest joys till the nearer approaches of glory, but also because our relishes are higher after a long fruition than at the first essays; such being the nature of grace, that it increases in relish as it does in fruition, every part of grace being new duty and new reward.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal and ever blessed Jesu, who didst choose disciples to be witnesses of thy life and miracles, so adopting man into a participation of thy great employment of bringing us to heaven by the means of a holy doctrine; be pleased to give me thy grace, that I may love and revere their persons whom thou hast set over me, and follow their faith, and imitate their lives, while they imitate thee; and that I also in my capacity and proportion may do some of the meaner offices of spiritual building, by prayers, and by holy discourses, and friendly exhortations, doing advantages to such souls with whom I shall converse. And since thou wert pleased to enter upon the stage of the world with the commencement of mercy and a miracle, be pleased to visit my soul with thy miraculous grace, turn my water into wine, my natural desires into supernatural perfections, and let my sorrows be turned into joys, my sins into virtuous habits, the weaknesses of humanity into communications of the divine nature: that since thou keepest the best unto the last, I may by thy assistance grow from grace to grace, till thy gifts be turned to reward, and thy graces to participation of thy glory. O eternal and ever blessed Jesu. Amen.

REFLECTIONS UPON NATHANIEL.

By the Editor.

THE high eulogium, thus pronounced on Nathaniel, by Him who searcheth the heart, and who is the faithful and true witness, has made the character of Nathaniel a standard of character in the church of Christ. We are never better pleased than when we can, with a good conscience, say of a Christian friend, "He was like Nathaniel an Israelite, indeed, in whom there is no guile."

Thus the memory of Nathaniel has never been lost sight of. But, who knows anything of his history, after his first interview with the Saviour?

According to John, Jesus said unto him, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Were you asked, When and how the promise were fulfilled to him, what answer could you give? In Matthew, Mark, and Luke the name never occurs. When they mention Philip, they always associate with him the apostle called Bartholomew. John again, never mentions the name, Bartholomew.

It is not likely that such a character as Nathaniel, should never appear again on the page of sacred history. Those who were called at the same time do not disappear.

He does not disappear. "After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias: and on this wise shewed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples," John xxi. 1, 2. Here the rest are apostles, although called disciples. And, as this was the third time. (This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead, John xxi. 14;) and as the two former were to the apostles, is it not probable that Nathaniel was an apostle, though not under the name Nathaniel?

He seems to be the Bartholomew of the apostolic list; and had, like others on that list, more than one name.

Augustine, doubts this identity—because the name may signify, the son of Tholmai, the founder of the Jewish school or sect of the Tholmaists; and argues that Christ would not have chosen a man of such learning, as one of the first disciples: seeing they were chiefly fishermen. But if the name necessarily meant this—it would not exclude him. Philip, who was one of them, manifests quite as much learning in the law and prophets, as Nathaniel; and Paul, and Luke were confessedly men of learning, as compared with the generality of the twelve.

The argument, is, then, thus: those who were called together, at the same time, are usually associated together in scripture. Now Philip and Nathaniel were called together—and as the other evangelists never use the name Nathaniel—but always Bartholomew; and as John joins Nathaniel with the apostles in the witness of the Resurrection, there is no positive reason to doubt their identity.

Thus only can we explain the promise made to Nathaniel. (John i. 51.) The Baptism of Christ, with its heavenly vision, was over before Nathaniel was called. What he saw afterwards, must, therefore, have been the angelic visions at the Resurrection and Ascension.

Bartholomew is said to have penetrated as far as India with the gospel,—on the Asiatic side. He was also the companion of Philip in Phrygia for a time; and with Philip consigned to martyrdom at Hierapolis. There, however, he was taken

down from the cross. He was, however, eventually crucified at Urbanople, in Armenia, after being flogged alive. *CAVE.*

Thus, the Nathaniel of John seems to be the Bartholomew of sacred and ecclesiastical history.

I. It was well for him, notwithstanding all the sincerity and simplicity of his character, that the events of his future history were not revealed to him when he was called to be a disciple of Christ.

The Saviour told him what he should see of his glory; but said nothing of what he should suffer in his own person. This—was not unkind! "It is the glory of God to conceal" the futurity of time from us.

Even a guileless heart—would be in danger of shrinking, if all the ordinary trials of life and godliness were foreseen at first.

II. It was well for him, that he was thus single and simple hearted, whatever had been the life or the death allotted to him by Providence.

Nothing is such a preparation for the snares of prosperity, or for the temptations of adversity,—as simplicity of heart and character. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways," whether his walk in life lie through the valley of humiliation, or over the mountains of plenty and success. In a thorny path his conscience will be unstable in honesty, or in tenderness; and in a flowery path, his spirit will be unstable in devotion, or in humility. Whereas, when there is no guile, there will be no unholy yielding or accommodating to circumstances. A guileless man will be upright in poverty, and humble in affluence.

This is true to a very great extent, of those who are only guileless from natural disposition, and more constitutional simplicity of character. There are such persons. They are naturally frank, straightforward and unartificial, and are unassuming, whatever be their lot in life. If they rise in life, they do not forget themselves; and if they sink in life, they do not lose their character. Prosperity cannot puff them up to pride; nor adversity puff them down to meanness; and yet—they have no religion! the gospel, the cross, the eternal law, has no more to do with this natural temper of their minds, than with the height or health of their bodies.

This is not the guilelessness commended by the Saviour, in the character of Nathaniel; and inculcated throughout the Bible. That is honesty of heart and of endeavour in religion, whatever may be the natural disposition; and this, is as necessary and possible where the natural disposition is suspicious and reserved, as where it is open and simple.

What the Saviour commended in Nathaniel, was not the temper which Nathaniel brought into the world with him; but the temper which he had acquired and cultivated, by prayer, by meditation, and by attention to the religion of the Bible. Whether his natural temper was good or bad, we know not: but we do know that he was a prayerful man;—and that no goodness of disposition would have been piety, apart from prayer; and no badness unconquerable by prayer.

The religion of the Bible is not one fitted only for the amiable, the gentle, the meek, or the simple. It is fitted to them certainly; but it is equally adapted and designed, to make the violent gentle; the irritable, calm; the rash, prudent; the suspicious, candid; and the deep, the far-sighted, and the clever, conscientious and upright.

Mistake not the gospel! It is as much wanted for salvation by the man of child-like simplicity, as by the man of devil-like stratagem. The latter is, indeed, a worse and a more dangerous character than the former; but the former is a sinner—is without love to God—is averse to spiritual things; and, therefore requires both pardon and regeneration; blessings obtained only from Christ, and applied only by the Spirit.

III. The guilelessness of Nathaniel, was as much towards God, as towards man.

Had he not striven to maintain a good conscience towards man, the Saviour would have despised Nathaniel's secret prayers under the figtree, as much as he did the long and public prayers of the fraudulent and hypocritical Pharisees. "The Lord," says Paul, "is the avenger of all who go beyond—to defraud his brother in any matter."

On the other hand—a good conscience towards man, will not excuse a bad conscience towards God. He has claims as well as man.

First, It is guile, towards God—to profess to believe an unexamined and unconsidered gospel. Secondly, It is guile, to profess regard for spiritual and eternal blessings which are not seriously prayed for. Thirdly, It is guile, to admit the obligation of duties which are yet neglected or delayed. Fourthly, It is guile, to serve any selfish purpose by a profession of religion. Fifthly, It is guile, to employ any doctrine of grace as a shelter or excuse for any sin.

IV. Nathaniel though guileless was not perfect.

It is not said, "Behold an Israelite, in whom is no guile, no weakness, no infirmity, no imperfection; but *no guile.*"

First, His habits of secret prayer imply his consciousness of imperfection. Secret devotion, whilst it is proof of true piety, is proof also that that piety feels its own weakness, and its need of support. If Nathaniel had felt no plagues in his heart, and found no ensnaring influence in the world, he would have been seldomer alone with God. But he was often under the figtree, because he was often sensible of his own danger.

Secondly, His prejudices prove that he was imperfect, though sincere. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Why not? Nazareth was, indeed, bad; but was Jerusalem better? A wiser man would have weighed this matter, and not been led away by a popular proverb. Besides, a more spiritual man would have remembered that God "can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"

This prejudice seems trifling; but mark—it would have diverted Nathaniel from Christ, had not Christ convinced him of his Messiahship by a manifestation of omniscience.—

Editor.

DISCOURSE VII.

Of Faith.

1. NATHANIEL'S faith was produced by an argument not demonstrative, not certainly conclusive; Christ knew him when he saw him first, and he believed him to be the Messiah: his faith was excellent, whatever the argument was. And I believe a God, because the sun is a glorious body; or because the variety of plants, or the fabric and rare contexture of a man's eye: I may as fully assent to the conclusion, as if my belief dwelt upon the demonstrations made by the prince of philosophers in the eighth of his physics and metaphysics. This I premise as an inlet to the consideration of the faith of ignorant persons. For if we consider upon what easy terms most of us now are Christians, we may possibly suspect that either faith hath but little excellence in it, or we but little faith, or that we are mistaken generally in its definition. For we are born of Christian parents, made Christians at ten days old, interrogated concerning the articles of our faith by way of anticipation, even then when we understand not the difference between the sun and a candle: from thence we are taught to say our catechism, as we are taught to speak, when we have no reason to judge, no discourse to discern, no arguments to contest against a proposition, in case we be catechised into false doctrine; and all that is put to us we believe infinitely, and without choice, as children use not to choose their language. And as our children are made Christians, just so are thousand others made Mahometans, with the same necessity, the same facility. So that thus far there is little thanks due to us for believing the Christian creed; it was indifferent to us at first, and at last our education had so possessed us, and our interest, and our no temptation to the contrary, that as we were disposed into this condition by

providence, so we remain in it without praise or excellency. For as our beginnings are inevitable, so our progress is imperfect and insufficient; and what we began by education, we retain only by custom: and if we be instructed in some slighter arguments to maintain the sect or faction of our country religion as it disturbs the unity of Christendom; yet if we examine and consider, upon what slight arguments we have taken up Christianity itself, (as that it is the religion of our country, or that our fathers before us were of the same faith, or because the priest bids us, and he is a good man, or for something else, but we know not what) we must needs conclude it the good providence of God, not our choice, that made us Christians.

2. But if the question be, whether such a faith be in itself good and acceptable, that relies upon insufficient and unconvincing grounds; I suppose this case of Nathaniel will determine us: and when we consider that faith is an infused grace, if God pleases to behold his own glory in our weakness of understanding, it is but the same thing he does in the instances of his other graces. For as God enkindles charity by a variety of means and instruments; by a thought, by a chance, by a text of Scripture, by a natural tenderness, by the sight of a dying or a tormented beast; so also he may produce faith by arguments of a differing quality, and by issues of his providence he may engage us in conditions, in which as our understanding is not great enough to choose the best, so neither is it furnished with powers to reject any proposition; and to believe well is an effect of singular predestination, and is a gift in order to a grace, as that grace is in order to salvation. But the insufficiency of an argument, or disability to prove our religion, is so far from disabling the goodness of an ignorant man's faith, that as it may be as strong as the faith of the greatest scholar, so it hath full as much excellency, not of nature, but in order to divine

acceptance. For as he who believes only by education, made no election of his faith, so he who believes what is demonstrably proved, is forced by the demonstration to his choice. Neither of them did choose, and both of them may equally *love* the article.

3. So that since a small argument in a weak understanding, does the same work that a strong argument in a more sober and learned, that is, it convinces and makes faith, and yet neither of them is a matter of choice; if the thing believed be good, and matter of duty or necessity, the faith is not rejected by God upon the *weakness* of the first, nor accepted upon the *strength* of the latter principles: when we are once in, it will not be inquired by what entrance we passed thither; whether God leads us or drives us in, whether we come by discourse or by inspiration, by the guide of an angel or the conduct of Moses, it is indifferent; so we be where we should be; for this is but the gate of duty, and the entrance to felicity. For thus far faith is but an act of the understanding, which is a natural faculty, serving indeed as an instrument to godliness, but of itself no part of it; and it is just like fire producing its act inevitably, and burning as long as it can, without power to interrupt or suspend its action; and therefore we cannot be more pleasing to God for understanding rightly, than the fire is for burning clearly: which puts us evidently upon this consideration, that Christian faith, that glorious duty which gives to Christians a great degree of approximation to God by Jesus Christ, must have a great proportion of that ingredient which makes actions good or bad, that is, of choice and effect.

4. For the faith of a Christian hath more in it of the will than of the understanding. Faith is that great mark of distinction which separates and gives formality to the covenant of the gospel, which is a law of faith. The faith of a Christian is his religion, that is, it is that whole conformity to the institution or discipline

of Jesus Christ which distinguishes him from the believers of false religions. And to be one of the faithful signifies the same with being a disciple; and that contains obedience as well as believing. For to the same sense are all those appellatives in Scripture, (the faithful, brethren, believers, the saints, disciples,) all representing the duty of a Christian. A believer and a saint, or a holy person, is the same thing; brethren signifies charity, and believers faith in the intellectual sense: the faithful and disciples signify both; for besides the consent to the proposition, the first of them is also used for perseverance and sanctity, and the greatest charity mixed with a confident faith up to the height of martyrdom. "Be faithful unto the death," (said the Holy Spirit,) "and I will give thee a crown of life." And when the apostles by way of abbreviation express all the body of Christian religion, they call it "Faith working by love;" which also St. Paul in a parallel place calls a "new creature;" it is "a keeping of the commandments of God:" that is the faith of a Christian, into whose definition charity is ingredient, whose sense is the same with keeping of God's commandments; so that if we define faith, we must first distinguish it. The faith of a natural person, or the faith of devils, is a mere believing a certain number of propositions upon the conviction of the understanding: but the faith of a Christian, the faith that justifies and saves him, is "faith working by charity, or faith keeping the commandments of God: They are distinct faiths in order to different ends, and therefore of different constitution; and the instrument of distinction is charity or obedience.

5. And this great truth is clear in the perpetual testimony of the Holy Scripture. For Abraham is called the "father of the faithful;" and yet our blessed Saviour told the Jews, that if they had been "the sons of Abraham, they would have done the works of Abraham;" and

therefore good works are by the apostle called the "footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham." "For faith in all its stages, at its first beginning, at its increment, at its greatest perfection, is a duty made up of the concurrence of the will and the understanding, when it pretends to the divine acceptance. Faith and repentance begin the Christian course. "Repent and believe the gospel" was the sum of the apostles' sermons; and all the way after it is, "faith working by love." Repentance puts the first spirit and life into faith, and love preserves it, and gives it nourishment and increase; love itself also growing by a mutual supply of spirits and nutriment from faith. Whoever does heartily believe a resurrection and life eternal upon certain conditions, will certainly endeavour to acquire the promises by obedience and observation of the conditions. For it is not in the nature or power of man directly to despise and reject so infinite a good: So that faith supplies love with argument and maintenance, and love supplies faith with life and motion; faith makes love reasonable, and love makes faith living and effectual. And therefore the old Greeks called faith and love a miraculous chariot or yoke; they bear the burthen of the Lord with an equal confederation: these are like Hippocrates' twins, they live and die together. Indeed faith is the first-born of the twins; but they must come both at a birth, or else they die. But if love, like Jacob, lays hold upon his elder brother's heel, it makes a timely and a prosperous birth, and gives certain title to the eternal promises. For let us give the right of primogeniture to faith, yet the blessing, yea and the inheritance too, will at last fall to love. Not that faith is disinherited but that love only enters into the possession. The nature of faith passes into the excellency of love before they can be rewarded; and that both may have their estimate, that which justifies and saves us keeps the name of

faith, but doth not do the deed till it hath the nature of love. For to think well, or to have a good opinion, or an excellent or a fortunate understanding, entitles us not to the love of God, and the consequent inheritance; but to choose the ways of the Spirit, and to relinquish the paths of darkness, this is the way of the kingdom, and the purpose of the Gospel, and and proper work of faith. 1 Cor. xiii.

6. And if we consider upon what stock faith itself is instrumental and operative of salvation, we shall find it is in itself acceptable, because it is a duty and commanded; and therefore, it is an act of obedience, a work of the Gospel, a submitting the understanding, a denying the affections, a laying aside all interests, and a bringing our thoughts under the obedience of Christ. This the apostle calls "the obedience of faith." And it is of the same condition and constitution with other graces, all which equally relate to Christ, and are as firm instruments of union, and are washed by the blood of Christ, and are sanctified by his death, and apprehend him in their capacity and degrees, some higher and some not so high: but hope and love apprehend Christ in a measure and proportion greater than faith, when it is *distinguished* from them. So that if faith does the work of justification, as it is a mere relation to Christ, then also does hope and charity; or if these are duties and good works, so also is faith: and all being alike commanded in order to the same end, and encouraged by the same reward, are also accepted upon the same stock, which is, that they are acts of obedience and relation too; they obey Christ, and lay hold upon Christ's merits, and are but several instances of the great duty of a Christian, or the actions of several faculties of the new creature. But because faith is the beginning grace, and hath influence and causality in the production of the others, therefore all the others as they are united in duty, are also in their title and united appellative; they are all

called by the name of faith, because they are parts of faith, as faith is taken in the larger sense : and when it is taken in the strictest and distinguishing sense, they are effects and proper products by way of natural emanation.

7. That a good life is the genuine and true-born issue of faith, no man questions that knows himself the disciple of the Holy Jesus ; but the obedience is the same thing with faith : and that all Christian graces are parts of its bulk and constitution, is also the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, and the grammar of Scripture, making faith and obedience to be terms coincident and expressive of each other. For faith is not a single star, but a constellation, a chain of graces, called by St. Paul "the power of God unto salvation to every believer;" that is, faith is all that great instrument which God intends to bring us to heaven : and he gives this reason, "In the Gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, for it is written the just shall live by faith." Which discourse makes faith to be a course of sanctity and holy habits, a continuation of a Christian's duty, such a duty as not only gives the first breath, but by which a man lives the life of grace. "The just shall live by faith;" that is, such a faith as grows from step to step, till the whole righteousness of God be fulfilled in it. "From faith to faith," (saith the apostles,) which St. Austin expounds, from faith believing, to faith obeying ; from imperfect faith, to faith made perfect by the animation of love ; that "he who is justified may be justified still." For as there are several degrees and parts of justification, so there are several degrees of faith answerable to it ; that in all senses it may be true, that "by faith we are justified, and by faith we live, and by faith we are saved." For if we proceed "from faith to faith," from believing to obeying, from faith in the understanding to faith in the will, from faith barely assenting to the revelations of God to faith obeying the command-

ments of God, from the body of faith to the soul of faith, that is, to faith formed and made alive by love ; then we shall proceed from justification, to justification : that is, from remission of sins to become to sons of God, and at last to an actual possession of those glories to which we were here consigned by the fruits of the Holy Ghost.

8. And in this sense the holy Jesus is called by the apostle "the author and finisher of our faith:" he is the principle, and he is the promoter ; he begins our faith in revelations, and perfects it in commandments ; he leads us by the assent of our understanding, and finishes the work of his grace by a holy life : which St. Paul there expresses by its several constituent parts ; "as laying aside every weight and the sin that so easily beset us, and running with patience the race that is set before us, resisting unto blood, striving against sin;" for in these things Jesus is therefore made our example, because he is the author and finisher of our faith ; without these faith is imperfect. But the thing is something plainer yet, for St. James says, that faith lives not but by charity ; and the life or essence of a thing is certainly the better part of its constitution, as the soul is to a man. And if we mark the manner of his probation, it will come home to the main point. For he proves that "Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteousness, because he was justified by works ; was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up his son ? And the Scripture was fulfilled, saying, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. For faith wrought with his works, and made his faith perfect." It was a dead and an imperfect faith, unless obedience gave it being, and all its integral or essential parts. So that faith and charity, in the sense of a Christian, are but one duty as the understanding and the will are but one reasonable soul ; only they produce several actions in order

to one another, which are but "divers operations, and the same Spirit."

9. Thus St. Paul, describing the "faith of the Thessalonians," calls it that whereby they "turned from idols," and whereby they "served the living God;" and the faith of the patriarchs "believed the world's creation, received the promises, did miracles, wrought righteousness," and did and suffered so many things as make up the integrity of a holy life. And therefore, "disobedience and unrighteousness is called want of faith;" and heresy which is opposed to faith is "a work of the flesh," because faith itself is a work of righteousness. And, that I may enumerate no more particulars, the thing is so known, that the word which in propriety of language signifies mispersuasion or infidelity, is rendered disobedience; and the "not providing for our families is an act of infidelity," by the same reason and analogy that obedience or charity and a holy life are the duties of a Christian, of a justifying faith. And although in the natural or philosophical sense faith and charity are distinct habits; yet in the sense of a Christian and the signification of duty they are the same; for we cannot believe aright, as believing is in the commandment, unless we live aright; for our faith is put on the account just as it is made precious by charity; according to that rare saying of St. Bartholomew, recorded by the supposed St. Dennis, "Charity is the greatest and the least theology:" all our faith, that is, all our religion, is completed in the duties of universal charity; as our charity or our manner of living is, so is our faith. If our life be unholy, it may be the faith of devils but not the faith of Christians. For this is the difference.

10. The faith of the devils hath more of the understanding in it, the faith of Christians more of the will: the devils in their faith have better discourse, the Christians better affections: they in their faith have better arguments, we more

charity. So that charity or a good life is so necessary an ingredient into the definition of a Christian's faith, that we have nothing else to distinguish it from the faith of devils: and we need no trial of our faith, but the examination of our lives. If you "keep the commandments of God," then have you "the faith of Jesus," (they are immediate in St. John's expression:) but if you be "importune and ungodly," you are in St. Paul's list amongst them that "have no faith." Every vice, that rules and sullies the fair beauty our souls, is a conviction of infidelity.

11. For it was the faith of Moses that made him despise the riches of Egypt; the faith of Joshua, that made him valiant; the faith of Joseph, that made him chaste; Abraham's faith made him obedient; Mary Magdalen's faith made her penitent; and the faith of St. Paul made him travel so far, and suffer so much, till he became a prodigy both of zeal and patience. Faith is a catholicon, and cures all the distempers of the soul; it "overcomes the world" (saith St. John), it "works righteousness" (saith St. Paul), it "purifies the heart" (saith St. Peter), it "works miracles" (saith our blessed Saviour), miracles in grace always, as it did miracles in nature at its first publication: and whatsoever is good, if it be a grace it is an act of faith; if it be a reward, it is the fruit of faith. So that as all the actions of a man are but the productions of the soul, so are all the actions of the new man the effects of faith. For faith is the life of Christianity, and a good life is the life of faith.

12. Upon the grounds of this discourse we may understand the sense of that question of our blessed Saviour, "when the son of man comes, shall he find faith on earth?" Truly just so much as he finds love and holy living, and no more. For then only we can be confident that "faith is not failed from among the children of men," when we feel the heats of the primitive

charity return, and the calentures of the first old devotion renewed; when it shall be accounted honourable to be a servant of Christ, and a shame to commit a sin: then, and then only, our churches shall be assemblies of the faithful, and the kingdoms of the world Christian countries. But so long as it is notorious that we have made Christian religion another thing than what the holy Jesus designed it to be; when it does not make us live good lives, but itself is made a pretence to all manner of impiety, a stratagem to serve ends, the ends of covetousness, of ambition and revenge; when the Christian charity ends in killing one another, for conscience sake, so that faith is made to cut the throat of charity, and our faith kills more than our charity preserves; when the humility of a Christian hath indeed a name amongst us, but it is like a mute person, talked of only; while ambition and rebellion, pride and scorn, self-seeking and proud undertakings transact most of the great affairs of Christendom; when the custody of our senses is to no other purposes, but that no opportunity of pleasing them pass away; when our oaths are like the fringes of our discourses, going round about them, as if they were ornaments and trimmings; when our blasphemies, profanation, sacrilege, and irreligion are become scandalous to the very Turks and Jews; while our lusts are always habitual, sometimes unnatural; will any wise man think that we believe those doctrines of humility and obedience, of chastity and charity, of temperance and justice, which the Saviour of the world made sacred by his sermon and example; or, indeed, any thing he either said or did, promised or threatened? For is it possible, a man with his wits about him, and believing that he should certainly be damned (that is, be eternally tormented in body and soul with torments greater than can be in this world,) if he be a swearer, or liar, or drunkard, or cheats his neighbour, that this man should dare

to do *these* things, to which the temptations are so small, in which the delight is so inconsiderable, and the satisfaction so none at all?

13. We see by the experience of the whole world, that the belief of an honest man, in a matter of temporal advantage, makes him do actions of such danger and difficulty, that half so much industry and sufferance would ascertain him into a possession of all the promises evangelical. Now let any man be asked whether he had rather be rich or be saved, he will tell you, without all doubt, heaven is the better option by infinite degrees: for it cannot be that riches, or revenge, or lust should be directly preferred, that is, be thought more eligible than the glories of immortality. That therefore men neglect so great a salvation, and so greedily run after the satisfaction of their baser appetites, must be attributed to the want of faith; they do not heartily believe that heaven is worth so much; there is upon them a stupidity of spirit, and their faith is dull, and its actions suspended most commonly, and often interrupted, and it never enters into the will so that the propositions are considered nakedly and precisely in themselves, but not as referring to us or our interests; there is nothing of faith in it, but so much as the first and direct act of understanding; there is no consideration nor reflexion upon the act, or upon the person, or upon the subject. So that even as it is seated in the understanding, our faith is commonly lame, mutilated and imperfect; and therefore much more is it culpable, because it is destitute of all co-operation of the rational appetite.

14. But let us consider the power and efficacy of worldly belief. If a man believes there is gold to be had in Peru for fetching, or pearls and rich jewels in India for the exchange of trifles, he instantly, if he be in capacity, leaves the wife of his bosom, and the pretty delights of children, and his own security, and ventures into the dangers of waters and unknown seas,

and freezings, and calentures, thirst and hunger, pirates and shipwrecks, and hath within him a principle strong enough to answer all objections, because he *believes* that riches are desirable, and by such means likely to be had. Our blessed Saviour, comparing the gospel to a merchant-man that found a pearl of great price, and sold all to buy it, hath brought this instance home to the present discourse. For if we did as verily believe that, in heaven, those great felicities which transcend all our apprehensions are certainly to be obtained by leaving our vices and lower desires, what can hinder us but we should at least do as much for obtaining those great felicities, as for the lesser, if the belief were equal? For if any man thinks he may have them without holiness, and justice, and charity, then he wants faith, for he believes not the saying of St. Paul, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall ever see God." If a man believes learning to be the only or chiefest ornament and beauty of souls, that which will ennoble him to a fair employment in his own time, and an honourable memory in succeeding ages; this if he believes heartily, it hath power to make him endure catarrhs, gouts, hypochondriacal passions, to read till his eyes almost fix in their orbs, to despise the pleasures of idleness or tedious sports, and to undervalue whatsoever does not co-operate to the end of his faith, the desire of learning. Why is the Italian so abstemious in his drinking, or the Helvetian so valiant in his fight, or so true to the prince that employs him, but that they believe it to be noble so to be? If they believed the same, and had the same honourable thoughts of other virtues, they also would be as national as these. For faith will do its proper work. And when the understanding is peremptorily and fully determined by the persuasion of a proposition, if the will should then dissent and choose the contrary, it were unnatural and monstrous; and possibly no man

ever does so: for that men do things without reason and against their conscience, is, because they have put out their light, and discourse their wills into the election of a sensible good, and want faith to believe truly all circumstances which are necessary by way of predisposition for choice of the intellectual good.

15. But when men's faith is confident, their resolution and actions are in proportion. For thus the faith of Mahometans makes them to abstain from wine for ever; and therefore, if we had the christian faith, we should much rather abstain from drunkenness for ever; it being an express rule apostolical; "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess." The faith of the Circumcellians made them run greedily to violent and horrid deaths, as willingly as to a crown; for they thought it was the king's highway to the crown of martyrdom. And there was never any man zealous for his religion, and of an imperious bold faith, but he was also willing to die for it; and therefore also by as much reason to live in it, and to be a strict observer of its prescriptions. And the stories of the strict sanctity, and prodigious sufferings, and severe disciplines, and expensive religion, and compliant and laborious charity of the primitive christians, furnish abundant argument to convince us, that the faith of christians is infinitely more fruitful and productive of its univocal and proper issues, than the faith of heretics, or the false religions of misbelievers, or the persuasions of secular persons, or the spirit of antichrist. And therefore when we see men serving their prince with such difficult and ambitious services, because they believe him able to reward them, though of his will they are not so certain; and yet so supinely negligent and incurious of their services to God, of whose power and will to reward us infinitely, there is certainty, absolute and irrespective; it is certain proof that they believe it not; for if we believe there is such a thing as heaven, and

that every single man's portion of heaven is far better than all the wealth in the world, it is morally impossible we should prefer so little before so great profit.

16. I instance but once more. The faith of Abraham was instanced in the matter of confidence or trust in the divine promises; and he being the father of the faithful, we must imitate his faith by a clear dereliction of ourselves and our own interests, and an entire confident relying upon the divine goodness in all cases of our needs or danger. Now this also is a trial of the verity of our faith, the excellency of our condition, and what title we have to the glorious names of Christians, and faithful, and believers. If our fathers when we were in pupillage and minority, or a true and an able friend when we were in need, had made promises to supply our necessities; our confidence was so great, that our care terminated. It were also well that we were as confident of God, and as secure of the event, when we had disposed ourselves to the reception of the blessing, as we were of our friend or parents. We all profess that God is Almighty, that all his promises are certain, and yet, when it comes to a pinch, we find that man to be more confident who hath ten thousand pounds in his purse, than he that reads God's promises over ten thousand times. "Men of a common spirit," saith St. Chrysostome, "of an ordinary sanctity, will not steal, or kill, or lie, or commit adultery; but it requires a rare faith, and a sublimity of pious affections, to believe that God will work a deliverance which to me seems impossible." And indeed St. Chrysostome hit upon the right. He had need be a good man and love God well, that puts his trust in him. For those we love we are most apt to trust; and although trust or confidence is sometime founded upon experience, yet it is also begotten and increased by love, as often as by reason and discourse. And to this purpose it was excellently said by St. Basil, "That the

knowledge which one man learneth of another, is made perfect by continual use and exercise; but that which, through the grace of God, is ingrafted in the mind of man, is made absolute by justice, gentleness, and charity." So that if you are willing even in death to confess, not only the articles, but in affliction and death to trust the promises; if in the lowest nakedness of poverty you can cherish *yourselves* with the expectation of God's promises and dispensation, being as confident of food and raiment, and deliverance or support, when all is in God's hand, as you are when it is in your own; if you can be cheerful in a storm, smile when the world frowns, be content in the midst of spiritual desertions and anguish of spirit, expecting all should work together for the best, according to the promise; if you can strengthen yourselves in God when you are weakest, believe when you see no hope, and entertain no jealousies or suspicions of God though you see nothing to make you confident; then you have faith, which in conjunction with its other parts is able to save your souls. For in this precise duty of trusting God there are the rays of hope, and great proportions of charity and resignation.

17. The sum is, that pious and most christian sentence of the author of the ordinary gloss: to believe in God through Jesus Christ is, by believing to love him, to adhere to him, to be united to him by charity and obedience, and to be incorporated into Christ's mystical body in the communion of saints. I conclude this with a collation of certain excellent words of St. Paul, highly to the present purpose. "Examine yourselves, brethren, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." Well, but how? "Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" There's the touchstone of faith. If Jesus Christ dwells in us, then we are true believers; if he does not, we are reprobates, we have no faith. But how shall we know whether Christ

be in us or no? St. Paul tells us that too. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead, by reason of sin; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness." That is the christian's mark, and the characteristic of a true believer. A death unto sin, and a living unto righteousness; a mortified body, and a quickened spirit. This is plain enough, and by this we see what we must trust to. A man of a wicked life does in vain hope to be saved by his faith, for indeed his faith is but equivocal and dead; which, as to his purpose, is just none at all; and therefore let him no more deceive himself. For, (that I may still use the words of St. Paul) "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. For such, and such only, in the great scrutiny for faith in the day of doom, shall have their portion in the bosom of faithful Abraham.*"

THE PRAYER.

1. O eternal God, fountain of all truth and holiness, in whom to believe is life eternal; let

thy grace descend with a mighty power into my soul, beating down every strong hold and vainer imagination, and bringing every proud thought and my confident and ignorant understanding into the obedience of Jesus: take from me all disobedience and refractoriness of spirit, all ambition and private and baser interests; remove from me all prejudice and weakness of persuasion, that I may wholly resign my understanding to the persuasions of Christianity, acknowledging thee to be the principle of truth, and thy word the measure of knowledge, and thy laws the rule of my life, and thy promises the satisfaction of my hopes, and an union with thee to be the consummation of charity in the fruition of glory. Amen.

2. Holy Jesus, make me to acknowledge thee to be my Lord and Master, and myself a servant and disciple of thy holy discipline and institution; let me love to sit at thy feet, and suck in with my ears and heart the sweetness of the holy sermons. Let my soul be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, with a peaceable and docile disposition. Give me great boldness in the public confession of thy name and the truth of thy gospel, in despite of all hostilities and temptations. Amen.

3. O holy and ever blessed Spirit, let thy gracious influences be the perpetual guide of my rational faculties; inspire me with wisdom and knowledge, spiritual understanding and a holy faith; and sanctify my faith, that it may arise up the confidence of hope, and the adherences of charity, and be fruitful in a holy conversation. Amen.

* In the times of Taylor, and even later, the "practical design of faith was better understood than its nature. Accordingly, whilst there is much in this section, to assist us in examining our faith by our works, it is woefully defective, as an exhibition of the object of faith. Perhaps, I ought rather to say, that the author takes for granted that we do believe the glad tidings of a free salvation through the blood of Christ. This, however, is not so common, as the belief of *articles* of faith. Many require to be told in very plain terms, that the belief of a creed is not faith. Faith is the cordial belief of God's promised mercy and grace through Christ Jesus. And that cannot be believed with the heart, without both cheering the heart and sanctifying the life. It is not the *gospel* he is believing, who is almost *hopeless* of his own salvation: nor is he believing it aright, whose hopes do not lead to holiness.—Ed.

SECTION XI.

OF CHRIST'S GOING TO JERUSALEM TO THE PASSOVER THE FIRST TIME AFTER HIS MANIFESTATION.

1. IMMEDIATELY after this miracle Jesus abode a few days in Capernaum, but because of the approach of the great feast of passover, he ascended to Jerusalem; and the first public act of record that he did, was an act of holy zeal and religion in behalf of the honour of the temple. For divers merchants and exchangers of money made the temple to be the market and the bank, and brought beasts thither to be sold for sacrifice against the great pascal solemnity. At the sight of which, Jesus, being moved with zeal and indignation, made a whip of cords, and drove the beasts out of the temple, overthrew the accounting tables, and commanded them that sold the doves to take them from thence. For his anger was holy, and he would mingle no injury with it; and therefore the doves, which if let loose would be detrimental to the owners, he caused to be fairly removed. He thus published the religion of holy places, establishing their sacredness for ever by his first gospel sermon that he made at Jerusalem. "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise; for it shall be called a house of prayer to all nations." And being required to give a sign of his vocation, (for this, being an action like the religion of the zealots among the Jews, if it was not attested by something extraordinary, might be abused into an excess of liberty) he only foretold the resurrection of his body after three days' death, but he expressed it in the metaphor of the temple. "Destroy this temple, and I will build it again in three days." He spake of

the temple of his body, and they understood him of the temple at Jerusalem; and it was never rightly construed till it was accomplished.

2. At this public convention of the Jewish nation, Jesus did many miracles, published himself to be the Messiah, and persuaded many disciples; amongst whom was Nicodemus, a doctor of the law, and a ruler of the nation; he came by night to Jesus, and affirmed himself to be convinced by the miracles which he had seen; for no man could do those miracles except God be with him. When Jesus perceived his understanding to be so far disposed, he began to instruct him in the great secret and mysteriousness of regeneration, telling him "that every production is of the same nature and condition with its parent; from flesh comes flesh and corruption, from the Spirit comes spirit, and life, and immortality; and nothing from a principle of nature could arrive to a supernatural end; and therefore the only door to enter into the kingdom of God, was water, by the manuduction of the Spirit; and by this regeneration we are put into a new capacity, of living a spiritual life in order to a spiritual and supernatural end."

3. This was strange philosophy to Nicodemus; but Jesus bade him "not to wonder; for this is not a work of humanity, but a fruit of God's Spirit, and an issue of predestination. For the Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and is as the wind, certain and notorious in the effects, but secret in the principle and in the manner of production. And therefore this doctrine was

not to be estimated by any proportions to natural principles or experiments of sense, but to the secrets of new metaphysics, and abstract speculations. Then Christ proceeds in his sermon, telling him there are yet higher things for him to apprehend and believe; for this, in respect of some other mysteries of his gospel, was but as earth in comparison of heaven. Then he tells of his own descent from heaven, foretells his death and ascension, and the blessing of redemption, which he came to work for mankind; he preaches of the love of the Father, the mission of the Son, the rewards of faith, and the glories of eternity; he upbraids the unbelieving and impenitent, and declares the differences of a holy and a corrupt conscience, the shame and fears of the one, the confidence and serenity of the other." And this is the sum of his sermon to Nicodemus, which was the fullest of mystery, and speculation, and abstract senses, of any that he ever made, except that which he made immediately before his passion; all his other sermons being more practical.

4. From Jerusalem, Jesus goeth into the country of Judea; attended by divers disciples, whose understandings were brought into subjection and obedience to Christ, upon confidence of the divinity of his miracles. There his disciples did receive all comers, and baptized them, as John at the same time did, and by that ceremony admitted them to the discipline and institution, according to the custom of the doctors and great prophets among the Jews, whose baptism of their scholars was the ceremony of their admission. As soon as John heard it, he acquitted himself in public by renewing his former testimony concerning Jesus, affirming him "to be the Messiah, and now the time was come that Christ must increase, and the Baptist suffer diminution; for Christ came from above, was above all; and the sum of his doctrine was, that which he had heard and seen from the Father, whom God sent to

that purpose, to whom God had set his seal, that he was true, who spake the words of God, whom the Father loved, to whom he gave the Spirit without measure, and into whose hands God had delivered all things; this was he, whose testimony the world received not." And that they might know not only what person they slighted, but how great salvation also they neglected, he sums up all his sermons and finishes his mission with this saying, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

5. For now that the Baptist had fulfilled his office of bearing witness unto Jesus, God was pleased to give him his *writ of ease*, and bring him to his reward upon this occasion. John, who had so learned to despise the world and all its exterior vanities and impertinent relations, did his duty justly, and so without respect of persons, that as he reprov'd the people for their prevarications, so he spared not Herod for his; but abstaining from all expresses of the spirit of scorn and asperity, mingling no discontents, interests, nor mutinous intimations with his sermons, he told Herod it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife. For which sermon he felt the furies and malice of a woman's spleen, was cast into prison, and about a year after was sacrificed to the scorn and pride of a lustful woman and her immodest daughter; being, at the end of the second year of Christ's preaching, beheaded by Herod's command, who would not retract his promise, because of his honour, and a rash vow he made in the gaiety of his lust and complacencies of his riotous dancings. His head was brought up in a dish, and made a festival present to the young girl, (who gave it to her mother;) a cruelty that was not known among the barbarisms of the worst of people, to mingle banquetings with blood and sights of death; an insolency and inhumanity, for which the Roman orators accused

Q. Flaminius of treason, because to satisfy the wanton cruelty of Placentia, he caused a condemned slave to be killed at supper; and which had no precedent but in the furies of Marius, who caused the head of the consul Antonius to be brought up to him in his feasts, which he handled with much pleasure and insolency.

6. But God's judgments, which sleep not long, found out Herod, and marked him for a curse. For the wife of Herod, who was the daughter of Arctas, a king of Arabia Petraea, being repudiated by paction with Herodias, provoked her father to commence a war with Herod; who prevailed against Herod in a great battle, defeating his whole army, and forcing him to an inglorious flight; which the Jews generally expounded to be a judgment on him for the unworthy and barbarous execution and murder of John the Baptist; God in his wisdom and severity making one sin to be the punishment of another, and neither of them to pass without the signature of a curse. And Nicephorus reports, that the dancing daughter of Herodias, passing over a frozen lake, the ice brake, and she fell up to the neck in water, and her head was parted from her body, by the violence of the fragments shaken by the water and its own fall, and so perished; God having fitted a judgment to the analogy and representation of her sin. Herodias herself, with her adulterous paramour Herod, were banished to Lyons in France by a decree of the Roman senate, where they lived ingloriously and died miserably; so paying dearly for her triumphal scorn superadded to her crime of murder; for when she saw the head of the Baptist, which her daughter Salome had presented to her in a charger, she thrust the tongue through with a needle, as Fulvia had formerly done to Cicero.* But herself paid the charges of her triumph.

* St. Jerome expressly says, that when Herodias obtained the head of John, she drew out the tongue which had reproved her, and thrust it through with her bodkin.—Ed.

Considerations upon the First Journey of the Holy Jesus to Jerusalem.

1. When the feast came, and Jesus was ascended up to Jerusalem, the first place we find him in is the temple, where not only was the *area* and court of religion, but, by occasion of public conventions, the most opportune scene for the transaction of his commission and his Father's business. And those Christians who have been religious and affectionate even in the *circumstances* of piety, have taken this for precedent and accounted it a good expression of the regularity of their devotion and order of piety, at their first arrival to a city, to pay their first visits to God, the next to his servant the president of religious rites; first they went into the church and worshipped, then to the angel of the church, to the bishop, and begged his blessing: and having thus commenced with the auspiciousness of religion, they had better hopes that their just affairs would succeed prosperously, which, after the rites of Christian countries, had thus been begun with devotion and religious order.

2. When the holy Jesus entered the temple, and espied a mart kept in the holy sept, a fair upon holy ground, he, who suffered no transportations of anger in matters and accidents temporal, was borne high with an ecstasy of zeal, and according to the custom of the zealots of the nation, took upon him the office of private infliction of punishment in the cause of God; which ought to be dearer to every single person than their own interest and reputation. What the exterminating angel did to Heliodorus, who came into the temple with the design of sacrilege, that the meekest Jesus did to them who came with acts of profanation; he whipped them forth: and as usually good laws spring from ill manners, and excellent sermons are occasioned by men's iniquities, now also our great Master upon this accident asserted the sacredness of

holy places in the words of a prophet; which he made a lesson evangelical, "my house shall be called a house of prayer to all nations."

3. The beasts and birds there sold were brought for sacrifice, and the banks of money were for the advantage of the people that came from far, that their returns might be safe and easy when they came to Jerusalem upon the employments of religion. But they were not yet fit for the temple; they who brought them thither purposed their own gain, and meant to pass them through an unholy usage, before they could be made Anthemata, vows to God: and when religion is but the purpose at the second hand, it cannot hallow a lay design, and make it fit to become a religious ministry, much less sanctify an unlawful action. When Rachel stole her father's gods, though possibly she might do it in zeal against her father's superstition, yet it was occasion of a sad accident to herself. For the Jews say Rachel died in child-birth of her second son, because of that imprecation of Jacob, "with whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live." Saul pretended sacrifice when he spared the fat cattle of Amalek; and Micah was zealous when he made him an ephod and teraphim, and meant to make himself an image for religion when he stole his mother's money: but these are colours of religion, in which not only the world but ourselves are deceived by a latent purpose, which we are willing to cover with a remote design of religion, lest it should appear unhand-some in its own dressing.* Thus some believe a covetousness allowable, if they greedily heap treasure to build hospitals or colleges; and sinister acts of acquiring church-livings are not so soon condemned, if the design be to prefer an

able person; and actions of revenge come near to piety, if it be to the ruin of an ungodly man; and indirect proceedings are made sacred, if they be for the good of the holy cause. This is profaning the temple with beasts brought for sacrifices, and dishonours God by making him accessory to his own dishonour, as far as lies in them; for it disserves him with a pretence of religion: and, but that our hearts are deceitful, we should easily perceive that the greatest business of the letter is written in *postscript*; the great pretence is the *least* purpose; and the latent covetousness or revenge, or the secular appendix, is the *main* engine to which the end of religion is made but instrumental and pretended. But men when they sell a mule, speak of the horse that begat him, not of the ass that bore him.

4. The holy Jesus "made a whip of cords, to represent and chastise the implications and enfoldings of sin and the cords of vanity. *First*. There are some sins that of themselves are a whip of cords: those are the crying sins, that by their degree and malignity speak loud for vengeance; or such as have great disreputation, and are accounted the basest of a caitive disposition; or such which are unnatural and unusual; or which by public observation are marked with the signature of divine judgments. Such are murder, oppression of widows and orphans, detaining the labourer's hire, lusts against nature, parricide, treason, betraying a just trust in great instances and base manners, lying to a king, perjury in a priest: these carry Cain's mark upon them, or Judas's sting, or Manasseh's sorrow, unless they be made impudent by the spirit of obduration. *Secondly*. But there are some sins that bear shame upon them,

* QUEENSL, like Taylor speaks out on this subject. "Avarice covered with the veil of religion, is one of those things on which Christ looks with the greatest indignation in his church. Merchandize of holy things, Simonical presentations, fraudulent exchanges, a mercenary spirit in sacred functions: ecclesiastical employments obtained by flattery, service, or attend-

ance, or by anything that is instead of money; collations, nominations, and elections, made through any other motive than the glory of God, these are all fatal and damnable profanations, of which those in the temple are only a shadow." —QUEENSL.

and are used as correctives of pride and vanity, and if they do their cure, they are converted into instruments of good by the great power of the divine grace ; but if the spirit of the man grows impudent and hardened against the shame, that which commonly follows is the worst string of a whip, a direct consignment to a reprobate spirit. *Thirdly.* Other sins there are, for chastising of which Christ takes the whip into his own hand ; and there is much need when sins are the customs of a nation, and marked with no exterior disadvantage, or have such circumstances of encouragement that they are unapt to disquiet a conscience, or make our beds uneasy, till the pillows be softened with penitential showers. In both these cases the condition of a sinner is sad and miserable. For " it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God : " his hand is heavy, and his sword is sharp, and " pierces to the dividing the marrow and the bones : " and he that considers the infinite distance between God and us must tremble, when he remembers that he is to feel the issues of that anger, which he is not certain whether or no it will destroy him infinitely and eternally. *Fourthly.* But if the whip be given into our hands, so that we become executioners of divine wrath, it is sometimes worse : for we seldom strike ourselves for emendation, but add sin to sin, till we perish miserably and inevitably. God scourges us often into repentance ; but when a sin is the whip of another sin, and the rod is put into our hands, we, like blind men, strike with a rude and undiscerning hand, and because we love the punishment, do it without intermission or choice, and have no end but ruin.

5. When the holy Jesus had whipped the merchants in the temple, they took away all the

instruments of their sin. For a judgment is usually the commencement of repentance : love is the last of graces, and seldom at the beginning of a new life, but is reserved to the perfections and ripeness of a Christian. We begin in fear ; " the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom : when he smote them, then they turned, and enquired early after God." And afterwards the impressions of fear continue like a hedge of thorns about us, to restrain our dissolutions within the awfulness of divine majesty, that it may preserve what was begun. This principle of their emendation was from God, and therefore innocent and holy ; and the very purpose of divine threatenings is, that upon them, as upon one of the great hinges, the piety of the greatest part of men should turn : and the effect was answerable ; but so are not the actions of all those who follow this precedent in the track of the letter. For, indeed, there have been some reformations which have been so like this, that the greatest alteration which hath been made was, that they carried all things out of the temple, the money, and the tables, and the sacrifice : and the temple itself went at last. But these men's scourge is to follow after, and Christ, the prince of the catholic church, will provide one of his own countenance, more severe than the stripes which Heliodorus felt from the infliction of the exterminating angel. But the Holy Spirit of God, by making provision against such a reformation, hath prophetically declared the aptness which are in pretences of religious alterations, to degenerate into sacrilegious desires : " Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege ? " In this case there is no amendment, only one sin resigns to another, and the person still remains under its power and the same dominion. he

THE PRAYER.

O eternal Jesu, thou bright image of thy Father's glories, whose light did shine to all the world, when thy heart was inflamed with zeal and love of God, and of religion, let a coal from thine altar, fanned with the wings of the holy dove, kindle in my soul such holy flames, that I may be zealous of thy honour and glory, forward in religious duties, earnest in their pursuit, prudent in their managing, ingenuous in my purposes, making my religion to serve no end but of thy glories, and the obtaining of thy promises: and so sanctify my soul and my body, that I may be a holy temple, fit and prepared for the inhabitation of thy ever blessed Spirit, whom grant that I may never grieve by admitting any impure thing to desecrate the place, and unhallow the courts of his abode: but give me a pure soul in a chaste and healthful body, a spirit full of holy simplicity, and designs of great ingenuity, and perfect religion, that I may intend what thou commandest, and may with proper instruments prosecute what I so intend, and by thy aids may obtain the end of my labours, the rewards of obedience and holy living, even the society and inheritance of Jesus in the participation of the joys of thy temple, where thou dwellest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, O eternal Jesus. Amen.

DISCOURSE VIII.

Of the Religion of the Holy Places.

1. The Holy Jesus brought a divine warrant for his zeal. The selling sacrifices, and the exchange of money, and every lay employment did violence and dishonour to the temple: which was hallowed to ecclesiastical ministries, and

set apart for offices of religion, for the use of holy things; for it was God's house: and so is every house, by public designation *separated* for prayer or other uses of religion, God's house. (My house:) God had a propriety in it, and had set his mark on it, even his own name. And therefore it was in the Jew's idiom of speech called "the mountain of the Lord's house," and "the house of the Lord" by David frequently: God had put his name into all places appointed for solemn worship; "in all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and bless thee." For God, who was never visible to mortal eye, was pleased to make himself present by substitution of his name; that is, in certain places he hath appointed that his name shall be called upon, and by promising and imparting such blessings as he hath made consequent to the invocation of his name, hath made such places to be a certain determination of some *special* manner of his presence. For God's name is not a distinct thing from himself, not an idea, and it cannot be put into a place in literal signification: the expression is to be resolved into some other sense. God's name is that whereby he is known, by which he is invocated, that which is the most immediate publication of his essence: nearer than which we cannot go unto him: and because God is essentially present in all places, when he makes himself present in one place more than another, it cannot be understood to any other purpose, but that in such places he gives special blessings and graces, if that in those places he appoints his name, that is, himself, specially to be invocated.

2. So that when God puts his name in any place by a special manner, it signifies that there himself is in *that* manner. But in separate and hallowed places God hath said, that he puts his name with a purpose it should be called upon; therefore in plain signification it is thus, in consecrate places God himself is

present to be invoked; there he is most delighted to hear the prayers we make unto him. For all such expressions of Scripture, "as God's house, the tabernacle of God, God's dwellings, putting his name there, his sanctuary," are resolved into that saying of God to Solomon, who prayed that he would hear the prayers of necessitous people in that place. God granting this request expressed it thus; "I have sanctified the house which thou hast built: that is, the house which thou hast designed for my worship, I have designed for your blessing; what you have dedicated, I have accepted; what you have consecrated, I have hallowed; I have taken it for the same purpose to which your desires and designation intended it in your first purposes and expense." So that since the purpose of man in separating places of worship is, that thither by order and with convenience and in communities of men God may be worshipped and prayed unto, God having declared, that he accepts of such separate places to the same purposes, says, that there he will be called upon, that such places shall be places of advantage to our devotions both in respect of human order and divine acceptance and benediction.

3. Now these are therefore God's houses, because they were given by men, and accepted by God, for the service of God and the offices of religion. And this is not the effect or result of any distinct covenant God hath made with man at any period of the world, but it is merely a *favour* of God, either hearing the prayer of dedication, or complying with human order or necessities. For there is nothing in the covenant of Moses' law, that, by virtue of special stipulation, makes the assignment of a house for the service of God, to be proper to Moses' rite. Not only because God had memorials and determinations of this *manner* of his presence *before* Moses' law, as at Bethel, where Jacob laid the first stone of the church, (nothing but a *stone* was God's memorial) and the

beginning and first rudiments of a temple; but also because after Moses' law was given, as long as the nation was ambulatory, so were their places and instruments of religion: and although the ark was not confined to a place till Solomon's time, yet God was pleased in this manner to confine himself to the ark; and in all places wherever his name was put, even in synagogues, and oratories, and threshing floors, when they were hallowed with an altar and religion, thither God came; that is, there he heard them pray, and answered and blessed accordingly in proportion to that degree of religion which was put upon them. And those places, when they had once entertained religion, grew separate and sacred for ever. For, therefore, David bought the threshing floor of Araunah, that it might never return to common use any more: for it had been no trouble or inconvenience to Araunah to have used his floor for one solemnity; but he offered to give it, and David resolved to buy it, because it must of necessity be alienated from common uses, to which it could never return any more when once it had been the instrument of a religious solemnity: and yet this was no part of Moses' law, that every place of a temporary sacrifice should be holy for ever. David had no guide in this but right reason and the religion of all the world. For such things which were great instruments of public ends, and things of highest use, were also in all societies of men of greatest honour, and immured by reverence and the security of laws. For honour and reputation is not a thing inherent in any creature, but depends upon the estimate of God or men, who either in diffusion or representation become fountains of a derivative honour. Thus some men are honourable; that is, those who are fountains of honour, in civil account, have commanded that they shall be honoured. And so places and things are made honourable, that, as honourable persons are to be distinguished from others by honourable

usages and circumstances proper to them, so also should places and things (upon special reason separate) have an usage proper to them, when by a public instrument or minister they are so separated. No common usage then, but something proper to tell what they are, and to what purposes they are designed, and to signify their separation and extraordinariness. Such are the person of the prince, the archives and records of a kingdom, the walls and great defences of the imperial city, the eagles and ensigns of war amongst the Romans, and above all things, though not above all persons, the temples and altars, and all the instruments of religion. And there is much reason in it. For thus a servant of a king, though his employment be naturally mean, yet is more honourable, because he relates to the most excellent person; and therefore much more those things which relate to God. And though this be the reason why it should be so, yet for this and other reasons, they that have power, that is, they who are acknowledged to be the fountains and the channels of honour, I mean the supreme power, and public opinion, have made it actually to be so. For whatsoever all wise men, and all good men, and all public societies, and all supreme authority hath commanded to be honoured or revered, that is honourable and reverend. This honour or reverence is to be expressed according to the customs of the nation, and instruments of honour proper to the nature of the thing or person respectively. Whatsoever is *esteemed* so, is so; because honour and noble separations are relative actions and terms, creatures and productions of fame, and the voice of princes, and the sense of people: and they who will not honour those things or those persons, which are thus decreed to be honourable, have no communications with the civilities of humanity, or the guises of wise nations; they do not give honour to whom honour belongs. Now that which in civil

account we call honourable, the same in religious account we call sacred: for by both these words we mean things or persons made separate from common opinion and vulgar usages, by reason of some excellency really inherent in them, (such as are excellent men;) or for their relation to excellent persons, or great ends, public or religious, (and so servants of princes and ministers of religion, are its instruments and utensils, are made honourable or sacred;) and the expressions of their honour are all those actions and usages which are contrary to despite, and above the usage of vulgar things or places. Whatsoever is sacred, that is honourable for its religious relation; and whatsoever is honourable, that also is sacred, for its civil excellency or relation. The result is this, that when public authority, or the consent of a nation, hath made any place sacred for the uses of religion, we must esteem it sacred, just as we esteem persons honourable who are so honoured. And thus are judges and the very places of judicature, the king's presence chamber, the chair of state, the senate house, the royal ensigns of a prince, whose gold and purple in its natural capacity hath in it no more dignity than the money of the bank, or the cloth of the mart; but it hath much more for its signification and relative use. And it is certain that things whose excellency depends upon their relation, must receive the degree of their honour in that proportion they bear to their term and foundation: and therefore what belongs to God (as holy places of religion) must rise highest in this in this account; I mean higher than any other places. And this is besides the honour which God hath put them by his presence and his title to them, which in all religions he hath signified to us.

4. Indeed among the Jews, as God had confined his church and the rites of religion to be used only in communion and participation with the nation, so also he had limited his presence.

and was more sparing of it than in the time of the gospel his Son declared he would be. "It was said of old, that at Jerusalem men ought to worship," that is, by a solemn, public and great address, in the capital expressions of religion, in distinguishing rites of liturgy; for else it had been no new thing. For in ordinary prayers God was then, and long before, pleased to hear Jeremy in the dungeon, Manasseh in prison, Daniel in the lion's den, Jonah in the belly of the deep, and in the offices yet more solemn in the Proseucha, in the houses of prayer which the Jews had, not only in their dispersion, but even in Palestine, for their diurnal and nocturnal devotions. But when the Holy Jesus had "broken down the partition-wall," then the most solemn offices of religion were as unlimited as their private devotions were before; for wherever a temple should be built, thither God would come, if he were "worshipped spiritually and in truth," that is, according to the rites of Christ, (who is grace and truth) and the dictate of the Spirit, and analogy of the gospel. All places were now alike to build churches in, or memorials for God, God's houses. And, that our blessed Saviour discourses of places of public worship to the woman of Samaria, is notorious, because the whole question was concerning the great addresses of Moses's rites, whether at Jerusalem or Mount Gerizem, which were the places of the *right* and the schismatical temple; the confinements of the whole religion; and in antithesis Jesus said, nor here nor there shall be the solemnities of address to God, but in all places you may build a temple, and God will dwell in it.

5. And this hath descended from the first beginnings of religion, down to the consummation of it in the perfections of the gospel. For the apostles of our Lord carried the offices of the gospel into the temple of Jerusalem; there they preached and prayed, and paid vows, but never, that we read of offered sacrifice: which

shews, that the offices purely evangelical were proper to be done in any of God's proper places, and that thither they went, not in compliance with Moses's rites, but merely for gospel duties, or for such offices which were common to Moses and Christ, such as were prayers and vows. While the temple was yet standing they had peculiar places for the assemblies of the faithful, where either by accident, or observation, or religion, or choice, they met regularly. And for instance in the house of John surnamed Mark, which, as Alexander reports in the life of Saint Barnabas, was consecrated by many actions of religion, by our blessed Saviour's eating the passover, his institution of the holy Eucharist, his farewell sermon; and the apostles met there in the octaves of Easter, whither Christ came again, and hallowed it with his presence; and there, to make up the relative sanctification complete, the Holy Ghost descended upon their heads in "the feast of Pentecost:" and this was erected into a fair fabric, and is mentioned as a famous church by St. Jerome and Ven. Bede. There also, as Adrichomius adds, St. Peter preached that sermon which was miraculously* prosperous in the conversion of three thousand; there St. James brother of our Lord was consecrated first bishop of Jerusalem, St. Stephen and the other six were there ordained deacons: there the apostles kept their first council and compiled their creed: by these actions and their frequent conventions showing the same reason, order and prudence of religion in assignation of special places of divine service, which were ever observed by all the nations, and religions, and wise men of the world. And it were a strange imagination to fancy that, in the Christian religion, there is any principle contrary to that wisdom of God and all the world; which, for order, for necessity, for convenience, for the

* If there be any truth in this tradition, Peter must have preached from a window of the house, and not in it; for the converts, on the occasion, were three thousand souls.—Ed

solemnity of worship, hath set apart places for God and for religion. Private prayer had always an unlimited residence and relation, even under Moses' law; but the public solemn prayer of sacrifice in the law of Moses was restrained to one temple: in the law of nature it was not, confined to one, but yet determined to public and solemn places; and when the holy Jesus disparked the inclosures of Moses, we all returned to the permissions and liberty of the natural law, in which although the public and solemn prayers were confined to a temple, yet the temple was not confined to a place; but they might be anywhere, so they were there at all; instruments of order, conveniences of assembling, residences of religion: and God, who always loved order, and was apt to hear all holy and prudent prayers, (and therefore, also the prayers of consecration) hath often declared that he loves such places, that he will dwell in them; not that they are advantages to him, but that he is pleased to make them so to us. And therefore all nations of the world built houses for religion; and since all ages of the church did so too, it had need be a strong and a convincing argument that would shew they were deceived. And "if any man list to be contentious," he must be answered with St. Paul's reproof. "we have no such custom nor the churches of God."

6. Thus St. Paul reproved the Corinthians for "despising the church of God" by such uses, which were therefore unfit for God's, because they were proper for their own, that is, for common houses. And although they were at first and in the descending ages so afflicted by the tyranny of enemies, that they could not build many churches, yet some they did, and the churches themselves suffered part of the persecution. For so Eusebius reports, that when under Severus and Gordianus, Philip and Galienus, the Christian affairs were in a tolerable condition, they built churches in great

number and at great expense. But when the persecution waxed hot under Diocletian, down went the churches, upon a design to extinguish or disadvantage the religion. Maximinus gave leave to rebuild them. Upon which rescript (saith the story) the Christians were overjoyed, and raised them up to an incredible height and incomparable beauty. Thus was the Christian religion then, and so it hath continued ever since, and, unless we should have new reason and new revelation, it must continue so till our churches are exchanged for thrones, and our chapels for seats placed before the Lamb in the eternal temple of the celestial Jerusalem.

7. And to this purpose it is observed, that the Holy Jesus first ejected the beasts of sacrifice out of the temple, and then proclaimed the place holy, and the scene of representing prayers, all which, in type, intimates the same thing that is involved in the expression of the next words, "my house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations;" now and for ever, to the Jews and to the Gentiles in all circumstances and variety of time and nation, God's houses are holy in order to holy uses; the time as unlimited as the nations were indefinite and universal. This is the more observable, because it was of the *outward* courts, not where Moses' rites alone were admitted, but the natural devotion of Jews and Gentile proselytes, that Christ affirmed it to be holy, to be the house of God, and the place of prayer. So that the religion of public places of prayer is not a rite of Levi, but a natural and prudent circumstance and advantage of religion in which all wise men agree; who, therefore, must have some common principle, with influence upon all the world, which must be the univocal cause of the consent of all men: which common principle must either be a dictate of natural or prime reason, or else some tradition from the first parents of mankind; which because it had order in it, beauty, religion, and confirmation from

heaven, and no reason to contest against it, it hath surprised the understanding and practices of all nations. And indeed we find that even in paradise, God had that which is analogical to a Church; a distinct place where he manifested himself present in proper manner: for Adam and Eve, when they had sinned "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord;" and this was the word in all descent of the church, for the being of God in holy places, "the presence of the Lord was there." And probably when Adam from this intimation, or a greater direction, had taught Cain and Abel to offer sacrifice to God in a certain place, where they were observed of each in their several offerings, it became one of the rules of religion which was transmitted to their posterity by tradition; the only way they had to communicate the dictates of divine commandment.

8. There is no more necessary to be added in behalf of holy places, and to assert them into the family and relatives of religion; but our estimate and deportment towards them is a matter of practice, and therefore of proper consideration. To which purpose I consider, that holy places being the residence of God's name upon earth, where he hath put it, that, by fiction of law, it may be the sanctuary and last resort in all calamities and need, God hath sent his agents to possess them, in person, for him. Churches and oratorios are regions and courts of angels, and they are there, not only to minister to the saints, but also they possess them in the right of God. There they are; so the greatest and prince of Spirits tells us, the Holy Ghost; "I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, the and his train filled the temple; above it stood seraphim;" that was God's train, and therefore holy David knew that his addresses to God were in the presence of angels: "I will praise thee with my whole heart, before the gods will I sing praise unto thee; before the angels, so it is in the Septuagint. And that

we might know where or how the kingly worshipper would pay this adoration, he adds, "I will worship towards thy holy temple." And this was so known by him, that it became expressive of God's manner of presence in heaven: "the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels, and the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place:" God in the midst of angels, and the angels in the midst of "the holy place;" and God in heaven is in the midst of that holy circle, as sure as he is amongst angels in the recesses of his sanctuary. Were the rudiments of the law worthy of an attendance of angels; and are the memorials of the gospel destitute of so brave a retinue? Did the beatified spirits wait upon the types? and do they decline the office at the ministration of the substance? Is the nature of man made worse since the incarnation of the Son of God? and have the angels purchased an exemption from their ministry since Christ became our brother? We have little reason to think so: and therefore St. Paul still makes use of the argument to press women to modesty and humility in churches, "because of the angels." And upon the same stock of St. Chrysostom chides the people of his diocese, for walking, and laughing, and prating in churches: the church is not a shop of manufactures or merchandise, but the place of angels and of archangels, the court of God, and the image or representment of heaven itself.

9. For if we consider that Christianity is something more than ordinary, that there are mysteries in our religion and in none *else*; that God's "angels are ministering spirits" for our good, either we must think very meanly of Christianity, or that greater things are in it than the presence of angels in our churches: and yet if there were no more, we should do well to behave ourselves there with the thoughts and apprehensions of heaven about us; always remembering, that our business there is an errand of religion,

and God is the object of our worshippings; and and therefore although by our weakness we are fixed in the lowness of men, yet because God's infinity is our object, it were very happy if our actions did bear some few degrees of a proportionable and commensurate address.

10. Now that the angels are there in the right of God, and are a manner and an exhibition of the divine presence, is therefore certain, because whenever it is said in the Old Testament that God appeared, it was by an angel; and the law itself, in the midst of all glorious terrors of its manifestation, "was ordained by angels, and a word spoken by angels;" and yet God is said to have descended upon the mount: and in the greatest glory that ever shall be revealed, till the consummation of all things, the instrument of the divine splendour is the apparition of angels; for when the Holy Jesus "shall come in the glory of his father, it is added by way of explication, "with an host of angels."

11. The result is those words of God to his people, "reverence my sanctuary." For what God loves in an especial manner, it is most fit we should esteem accordingly. "God loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." The least turf of hallowed glebe is with God himself of more value than all the campaigns of common possession; it is better in all senses: "the temple is better than gold, said our blessed Saviour; and therefore it were well we should do that which is expressed in the command of giving reverence to it, for we are too apt to pay undue devotions to gold: which precept the holiest of that nation expressed by worshipping towards the sanctuary, by pulling off their shoes when they went into it, by making it the termination of their religious addresses, by falling down low upon the earth in their accesses, by opening their windows towards it in their private devotions, by calling it the glory of their nation: as is certain in the instances of David, Daniel, and

the wife of Phinehas. I shall not need to say, that the devouter Christians in the first ages did worship God, with solemnities of address whenever they entered into their oratorios. It was a civility Jesus commanded his disciples to use in common houses, "when ye enter into a house, salute it:" I suppose he means the dwellers in it. And it is certain, whatever those devouter people did in their religious approaches, they designed it to God, who was the major-domo, the master of those assemblies: and thus did the convinced Christian in St. Paul's discourse, when he came into the church where they were prophesying in a known language; "the secrets of his heart are made manifest, and so falling down on his face he will worship God."

12. It was no unhandsome expression of reverencing God's sanctuary, that pious people ever used to bestow costly and fair ornaments upon it: for so all the Christians did; as soon themselves rose from contempt and scorn they raised Christian oratorios to an equal portion of their honour: and, by this way, they thought they did honour to God, who was the Numen of the place. Not that a rich house or costly offertory is better in respect of God, for to him all is alike, save that in equal abilities our devotion is distinguished by them; and be the offering never so contemptible, it is a rich devotion that gives the *best* we have: because although if all the wealth of the Levant were united into a present, it were short of God's infinity; yet such an offertory, or any best we have, makes demonstration, that if we had an offering infinitely better, we should give it, to express our love and our belief of God's infinite claims and perfection. And therefore let not "the widow's two mites" become a precedent to the instance and value of our donation; nor because she who gave no more, was accepted, think that two farthings is as fit to be cast into the corban as two thousand pound.

For the reason why our blessed Saviour commended the widow's oblation, was, for the *greatness* of it, not the smallness; "she gave all she had, even all her living," therefore she was accepted. And indeed since God gives to us much more than enough, beyond our necessities, much more for our conveniency, much for ease, much for repute, much for public compliances, for variety, for content, for pleasure, for ornament, we should deal unworthily with God Almighty, if we limit and restrain our returns to him by confining them within the narrow bounds of mere necessity. Certainly beggarly services and cheapness are not more pleasing to God than a rich and magnificent address. To the best of essences, the best of presents is most proportionable: and although the service of the soul and spirit is most delectable and esteemed by God, yet because our souls are served by things perishing and material, and we are of that constitution, that by the body we serve the spirit, and by both we serve God, as the spirit is chiefly to be offered to God, because it is better than the body, so the richest oblation is the best in an equal power and the same person, because it is the *best* of things material: and although it hath not the excellency of the spirit, it hath an excellency that a cheap oblation hath not; and, besides the advantage of the natural value, it can no otherwise be spoiled than a meaner offering may; it is always capable of the same commendation from the piety of the presenter's spirit, and may be as much purified and made holy as the cheaper or the more contemptible. God hath nowhere expressed that he accepts of a cheaper offering, but when we are not *able* to give him better. When the people brought offerings more than enough for the tabernacle, Moses restrained their forwardness, by saying it was enough; but yet commended the disposition highly, and wished it might be perpetual. But God chid the people when they let

his house lie waste without reparation of its decaying beauty; and therefore sent famines upon the land and a curse into their estate, because they would not, by giving a portion to religion, sanctify and secure all the rest. For the way for a man to be a savor by his religion, is, to deposit one part of his estate in the temple, and one in the hands of the poor; for these are God's treasury and stewards respectively; and this is laying up treasures in heaven.

13. For I consider that those riches and beauties in churches and religious solemnities, which add nothing to God, add much devotion to us, and much honour and efficacy to devotion. For, since impression is made upon the soul by the intervening of corporeal things, our religion and devotion of the soul receive the addition of many degrees by such instruments. Insomuch that we see persons of the greatest imagination, and such who are most pleased with outward elegance, are often most religious. Great understandings make religion lasting and reasonable; but chaste imaginations make it more scrupulous, strict, operative, and effectual. And therefore it is strange, that we shall bestow such great expenses to make our own houses convenient and delectable, that we may entertain ourselves with complacency, and yet think that religion is not worth the ornament, nor our fancies fit to be carried into the choice and prosecution of religious actions with sweetness, entertainments, and fair propositions. If we say that God is not the better for a rich house, or a costly service, we may also remember that neither are we the better for rich clothes; and the sheep will keep us as modest, as warm, and as clean, as the silk-worm; and a gold chain or a carcanet of pearl does no more contribute to our happiness than it does to the service of religion. For if we reply, that they help to the esteem and reputation of our persons, and the distinction of them from the vulgar, from the servants of the lot of Isaacar,

and add reverence and veneration to us, how great a shame is it, if we study by great expences to get reputation and accidental advantages to ourselves, and not by the same means to purchase reverence and esteem to religion, since we see that religion, amongst persons of ordinary understandings, receives as much external and accidental advantages by the accession of exterior ornaments and accommodation, as we ourselves can by rich clothes and garments of wealth, ceremony and distinction? And as in the princes' courts, the reverence to princes is quickened and increased by an outward state of glory, so also it is in the service of God: although the understandings of men are no more satisfied by a pompous magnificence than by a cheap plainness, yet the eye is: and so the fancy, and the affections, and the senses: that is, many of our facultiës are more pleased with religion, when religion, by such instruments and conveyances, pleases them. And it was noted Sozomen concerning Valens, the Arian emperor, that when he came to Casarea in Cappadocia he praised St. Basil their bishop, and upon more easy terms revoked his banishment, because he was a grave person, and did his holy offices with reverent and decent addresses, and kept his church assemblies with much splendour and solemnity.

14. But when I consider that saying of St. Gregory, "that the church is heaven within the tabernacle, heaven dwelling among the sons of men," and remember that God had studded all the firmament and paved it with stars, because he loves to have his house beauteous, and highly representative of his glory. I see no reason we should not do as Apollinaris, says God does, "in earth do the works of heaven:" for he is the God of beauties and perfections, and every excellency in the creature is a portion of influence from the divinity, and therefore is the best instrument of conveying honour to him who made them, for no other end than his own

honour, as the last resort of all other ends for which they were created.

15. But the best manner to reverence the sanctuary, is, by the continuation of such actions as gave it the first title of holiness. "Holiness becometh thine house for ever," said Davil: Sancta sanctis, holy persons and holy rites in holy places; that as it had the first relation of sanctity, by the consecration of a holy and reverend minister and president of religion, so it may be perpetuated in holy offices, and receive the daily consecration by the assistance of sanctified and religious persons. Dogs and criminal persons are unfit for churches; the best ornament or beauty of a church is a holy priest and a sanctified people. For since angels dwell in churches, and God hath made his name to dwell there too; if there also be a holy people, that there be saints as well as angels, it is a holy fellowship and a blessed communion: but to see a devil there, would scare the most confident and bold fancy, and disturb the good meeting; and such is every wicked and graceless person: "Have I not chosen twelve of you, and one of you is a devil?" An evil soul is an evil spirit, and such are no good ornaments for temples: and it is a shame that a goodly Christian church should be like an Egyptian temple; without, goodly buildings; within, a dog or a cat for the deity they adore. It is worse, if in our addresses to holy places and offices we bear our lusts under our garments. For dogs and cats are of God's making, but our lusts are not, but are God's enemies; and therefore, besides the unholiness, it is an affront to God to bring them along, and it defiles the place in a great degree.

16. For there is one defiling of a temple by insinuation of impurities, and another by direct and positive profanation, and a third by express sacrilege. This "defiles a temple" to the ground. Every small sin is an unwelcome guest, and a spot in those "feasts of charity"

which entertain us often in God's houses. But there are some (and all great crimes are such) which desecrate the place, unhallow the ground, (as to us) stop the ascent of our prayers, obstruct the current of God's blessing, turn religion into bitterness, and devotion into gall; such as are marked in scripture with a distinguishing character, as enemies to the peculiar dispositions of religion. And such are unchastity, which defiles the temples of our bodies; covetousness, which sets up an idol instead of God; and unmercifulness, which is a direct enemy to the mercies of God, and the fair return of our prayers. He that shows not the mercies of alms, of forgiveness and comfort, is forbid to hope for comfort, relief or forgiveness from the hands of God. A pure mind is the best manner of worship, and the impurity of a crime is the greatest contradiction to the honour and religion of holy places. And therefore let us imitate the precedent of the most religious of kings. "I will wash my hands in innocency. O Lord, and so will I go to thine altar;" always remembering those decretory and final words of St. Paul, "He that defiles the temple, him will God destroy."

THE PRAYER.

O eternal God, who dwellest not in temples made with hands, the heaven of heavens is not able to contain thee, and yet thou art pleased

to manifest thy presence amongst the sons of men by special issues of thy favour and benediction; make my body and soul to be a temple pure and holy, apt for the entertainment of the Holy Jesus, and for the habitation of the Holy Spirit. Lord, be pleased, with thy rod of paternal discipline, to cast out all impure lusts, all wordly affections, all covetous desires from this thy temple, that it may be a place of prayer and meditation, of holy appetites and chaste thoughts, of pure intentions and zealous desires of pleasing thee; that I may become also a sacrifice as well as a temple, eaten up with the zeal of thy glory, and consumed with the fire of love; that not one thought may be entertained by me, but such as may be like perfume breathing from the altar of incense; and not a word may pass from me, but may have the accent of heaven upon it, and sound pleasantly in thy ears. O dearest God, fill every faculty of my soul with impresses, dispositions, capacities, and aptnesses of religion; and do thou hallow my soul, that I may be possessed with zeal and religious affections, loving thee above all things in the world, worshipping thee with the humblest adorations and frequent addresses, continually feeding upon the apprehensions of thy divine sweetness, and consideration of thy infinite excellences, and observations of thy righteous commandments, and the feast of a holy conscience, as an antepast of eternity, and consignation of the joys of heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SECTION XII

OF JESUS'S DEPARTURE INTO GALILEE; HIS MANNER OF LIFE, MIRACLES, AND PREACHING; HIS CALLING OF DISCIPLES; AND WHAT HAPPENED UNTIL THE SECOND PASSOVER.

1. "WHEN Jesus understood that John was cast into prison," and that the Pharisees were envious at him for the great multitudes of people that resorted to his baptism, which he ministered not in his own person, but by the deputation of his disciples, (they finishing the ministration which himself began,) (who, as Eudodius, Bishop of Antioch reports, baptized the Blessed Virgin and Peter only, and Peter baptized Andrew, James, and John, and they others,) "he left Judea, and came into Galilee;" and in his passage he must touch Sychar, a city of Samaria, where in the heat of the day and the weariness of his journey he sat himself down upon the margin of Jacob's well; whither, when "his disciples were gone to buy the meat, a Samaritan woman cometh to draw water," of whom Jesus asked some to cool his thirst, and refresh his weariness.

2. Little knew the woman the excellency of the person that asked so small a charity; neither had she been taught, that "a cup of cold water given to a disciple should be rewarded," and much rather such a present to the Lord himself; but she prosecuted the spite of her nation, and the interest and quarrel of the schism; and instead of washing Jesus's feet, and giving him drink, demanded, why he "being a Jew should ask water of a Samaritan: for the Jews have no intercourse with the Samaritans."

3. The ground of the quarrel was this. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, Salmanasar, king of Assyria sacked Samaria, transported the

Israelites to Assyria, and planted an Assyrian colony in the town and country, who, by divine vengeance, were destroyed by lions, which no power of man could restrain or lessen. The king thought the cause was, their not serving the God of Israel according to the rites of Moses; and therefore sent a Jewish captive priest to instruct the remaining inhabitants in the Jewish religion; who so learned and practised it, that they still retained the superstition of the Gentile rites; till Manasseh, the brother of Jaddi the high priest at Jerusalem, married the daughter of Samballat, who was the governor under king Darius. Manasseh being reproved for marrying a stranger, the daughter of an uncircumcised Gentile, and admonished to dismiss her, flies to Samaria, persuades his father-in-law to build a temple in Mount Gerizim, introduces the rites of daily sacrifice, and makes himself high priest, and began to pretend to be the true successor of Aaron, and commences a schism in the time of Alexander the Great. From whence the question of religion grew so high, that it begat disaffections, anger, animosities, quarrels, bloodshed, and murders, not only in Palestine, but wherever a Jew and Samaritan had the ill fortune to meet. Such being the nature of men, that they think it the greatest injury in the world when other men are not of their minds: and that they please God most when they are most furiously zealous; and no zeal better to be expressed than by hating all those whom *they* are pleased to think God hates. This schism

was prosecuted with the greatest spite, because both the people were much given to superstition: and this was helped forward by the constitution of their religion, consisting much in externals and ceremonials, and which they cared not much to hallow and make *moral* by the intertexture of spiritual senses and charity. And therefore the Jews called the Samaritans accursed; the Samaritans at the paschal solemnity would at midnight, when the Jews temple was open, scatter dead men's bones to profane and desecrate the place; and both would fight, and eternally dispute the question: sometimes referring it to arbitrators, and then the conquered party would decline the arbitration after sentence; which they did at Alexandria before Ptolemæus Philometor, when Andronicus had by a rare and exquisite oration procured sentence against Theodosius and Sabbaeus, the Samaritan advocates. The sentence was given for Jerusalem, and the schism increased, and lasted till the time of our Saviour's conference with this woman.

1. And it was so implanted and woven in with every understanding, that when the woman "perceived Jesus to be a prophet," she undertook this question with him, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus knew the schism was great enough already, and was not willing to make the rent wider: and though he gave testimony to the truth by saying, "salvation is of the Jews;" and "we know what we worship, ye do not;" yet, because the subject of this question was shortly to be taken away, Jesus takes occasion to preach the gospel, to hasten an expedient, and, by way of anticipation, to reconcile the disagreeing interests, and settle a revelation to be verified for ever. Neither here nor there by way of confinement, not in one country more than another, but wherever

any man shall call upon God "in spirit and truth," there he shall be heard.

5. But all this while the Holy Jesus was athirst, and therefore hastens at least to discourse of water, though as yet he got none. He tells her of "living water,"* of eternal satisfactions, of "never thirsting again," of her own personal condition, of matrimonial relation, and professes himself to be the Messiah. He then was interrupted by the coming of his disciples, who wondered to see him alone "talking with a woman," beyond his custom and usual reservation. But the woman full of joy and wonder left her waterpot, and ran to the city, to publish the Messiah: and immediately "all the city came out" to see, and "many believed on him upon the testimony of the woman, and more when they heard his own discourses." They invited him to the town, and received him with hospitable civilities for two days, after which he departed to his own Galilee.

6. Jesus therefore came into the country, where he was received with respect and fair entertainment, because of the miracles which the Galileans saw done by him at the feast; and being at Cana, where he wrought the first miracle, a noble personage. (a little king say some, a palatine, says St. Hierome; a kingly person certainly) came to Jesus with much reverence, and desired that he would be pleased to come to his house, and cure his son now ready to die; which he seconds with much importunity, fearing lest his son be dead before he get thither. Jesus, who did not do his miracles by natural operations, cured the child at a distance, and dismissed the prince, telling him his son lived; which by a narration of his servants he found to be true, and that he

* In the East, the literal meaning of living water is, *spring* water, whether running in streams, or confined in a well. Its religious import is, the grace of the Holy Spirit.—Ed.

recovered at the same time when Jesus spake these salutary and healing words. Upon which accident he and all his house became disciples.

7. And now Jesus left Nazareth, and came to Capernaum,* a maritime town of great resort; choosing that for his scene of preaching, and his place of dwelling. For now the time was fulfilled, the office of the Baptist was expired, and the kingdom of God was at hand. He therefore preached the sum of the gospel, faith and repentance; "repent ye and believe the gospel." And what that gospel was, the sum and series of all his sermons afterwards did declare.

8. The work was now grown high and pregnant, and Jesus saw it convenient to choose disciples to his ministry and service in the work of preaching, and to be "witnesses of all that he should say, do, or teach" for ends which were afterwards made public and excellent. Jesus, therefore, "as he walked by the sea of Galilee," called Simon and Andrew, who knew him before by the preaching of John, and now "left all, their ship, and their net, and followed him. And when he was gone a little farther, he calls the two sons of Zebedee, James and John; and they went after him." And with this family he goes up and down the whole of Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, healing all manner of diseases, curing demoniacs, cleansing lepers, and giving strength to paralytics and lame people.

9. But when "the people pressed on him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesareth," and presently "entering into Simon's ship," commanded him "to launch into the deep, and from thence he taught the people," and there wrought a miracle; for,

being Lord of the creatures, he commanded the fishes of the sea, and they obeyed. For when Simon, who had "fished all night in vain, let down his net at the command of Jesus, he enclosed so great a multitude of fishes, that the net brake," and the fishermen "were amazed" and fearful at so prodigious "a draught." But beyond the miracle it was intended, that a representation should be made of the plenitude of the Catholic church, and multitudes of believers who should be taken by Simon and the rest of the disciples, whom by that miracle he consigned to become "fishers of men;" who by their artifices of prudence and holy doctrine might gain souls to God, that when the net should be drawn to shore, and separation made by the angels, they and their disciples might be distinguished from the reprobate portion.

10. But the light of the sun uses not to be confined to a province or a kingdom; so great a prophet, and so divine a physician, and such miracles created a fame loud as thunder, but not so full of sadness and presage. Immediately the "fame of Jesus went into all Syria, and there came to him multitudes from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, and Judea." And all that had any "sick with divers diseases brought them to him," and he laid his hands on every one of them, "and healed them." And when he cured the "lunatics and persons possessed with evil spirits," the devils cried out and confessed him to be "Christ the Son of God;" but "he suffered them not," choosing rather to work faith in the persuasions of his disciples by moral arguments and the placid demonstrations of the Spirit, that there might in faith be an excellency in proportion to the choice, and that it might not be made violent by the conviction and forced testimonies of accursed and unwilling spirits.

11. But when Jesus saw his assembly was grown full, and his audience numerous, he

* So completely was Capernaum cast down to Hades, for impotence under the ministry and miracles of Christ, that no trace of it, nor of Chorazin and Bethsaida, is now to be found.—Ed.

"went up into a mountain," and when his disciples came unto him, he made that admirable sermon, called "the sermon upon the mount;" which is a divine repository of such excellent truths and mysterious dictates of secret theology, that it contains a breviary of all those precepts which integrate the morality of christian religion; pressing the moral precepts given by Moses, and enlarging their obligation by a stricter sense and more severe exposition; that their righteousness might "exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees; preaches perfection, and the doctrines of meekness, poverty of spirit, christian mourning, desire of holy things, mercy and purity, peace and toleration of injuries; affixing a special promise of blessing to be the guerdon and inheritance of those graces and spiritual excellences. He explicates some part of the decalogue, and adds appendixes and precepts of his own. He teaches his disciples to pray, how to fast, how to give alms, contempt of the world, not to judge others, forgiving injuries, an indifferency and incuriousness of temporal provisions, and a seeking of the kingdom of God and its appendant righteousness.

12. When Jesus had finished his sermon, and descended from the mountain, a poor leprous person came and worshipped, and begged to be cleansed; which Jesus soon granted, engaging him not to publish it where he should go abroad, but sending him to the priest to offer an oblation according to the rites of Moses's law; and then came directly to Capernaum, and "taught in their synagogues upon the Sabbath days." Where in his sermons he expressed the dignity of a prophet, and the authority of a person sent from God, not inviting the people by the soft arguments and insinuations of scribes and pharisees, but by demonstrations and issues of divinity. There he cures a demoniac in one of their synagogues, and bye and bye, after going abroad, he heals

Peter's wife's mother of a fever; insomuch that he grew the talk of all men and their wonder, till they flocked so to him to see him, to hear him, to satisfy their curiosity and their needs, that after he had healed those multitudes which beset the house of Simon, where he cured his mother of the fever, he retired himself into a desert place very early in the morning, that he might have an opportunity to pray, free from the oppressions and noises of the multitude.

13. But neither so could he be hid, but, like a light shining by the fringes of a curtain, he was soon discovered in his solitude; for the multitude found him out, imprisoning him in their circles and undeniable attendances. But Jesus told them plainly, he must "preach the gospel to other cities also," and therefore resolved to pass to the other side of the lake of Genesareth, so to quit the throng. Whither, as he was going, a scribe offered himself a disciple to his institution; till Jesus told him that his own condition was worse than "foxes and birds," for whom an habitation is provided, but none for him, no "not a place where to lay his head" and find rest. And what became of this forward professor afterward we find not. Others that were probationers of this fellowship, Jesus bound to a speedy profession, not suffering one to go home to bid his friends farewell, nor another so much as to "bury his dead."

14. By the time Jesus got to the ship, it was late, and being heavy to "sleep, rested on a pillow," and slept as soundly, as weariness, meekness, and innocence could make him: insomuch that "a violent storm," the chiding of the winds and waters, could not awake him; till the ship being almost covered with broken billows and the impetuous dealings of the waters, the men already sunk in their spirits, and the ship like enough to sink too, the disciples awakened him, and called for help:

"Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Jesus arising reproved their infidelity, commanded the wind to be still and the seas peaceable, and immediately "there was a great calm;" and they presently arrived in the land of the Gergesenes or Gerasenes.

15. In the land of Gergesites or Gergesenes, which was the remaining name of an extinct people, being one of the nations whom the sons of Jacob drave from their inheritance, there were two cities; Gadara from the tribe of Gad, to whom it fell by lot in the division of the land, (which, having been destroyed by the Jews, was rebuilt by Pompey at the request of Demetrius Gadarenses, Pompey's freed man) and near it was the Gersad, as Josephus reports: which diversity of towns and names is the cause of the various recitation of this story by the evangelists. Near this city of Gadara there were many sepulchres in the hollownesses of rocks, where the dead were buried, and where many superstitious persons used Memphisitic and Thessalic rites, invoking evil spirits; insomuch that at the instant of our Saviour's arrival in the country "there met him two possessed with devils from these tombs, exceeding fierce," and so had been long, "insomuch that no man dare not pass that way."

16. Jesus commanded the devils out of the possessed persons; but there were certain men feeding swine, which, though extremely abominated by the Jewish religion, yet for the use of the Roman armies and quarterings of soldiers they were permitted, and divers privileges granted to the masters of such herds; and because Gadara was a city, and the company mingled of Greeks, Syrians, and Jews, these last in all likelihood not making the greatest number; the devils therefore besought Jesus, that he would not send them into the abyss, but "permit them to enter into the swine." He gave them leave; "and the swine ran violently down a steep place into the" hot

baths, which were at the foot of the hill on which Gadara was built, (which smaller congregation of waters the Jews used to call "sea;") or else, as others think, into the lake of Gennesareth, "and perished in the waters." But this accident so troubled the inhabitants, that they came and "entreated Jesus to depart out of their coasts." And he did so; for leaving "Galilee of the Gentiles," he came to the lesser Galilee, and so again to the city of Capernaum.

17. But when he was come thither, he was met by divers scribes and pharisees, who came from Jerusalem, and "doctors of the law from Galilee; and while they were sitting in a house, which was encompassed with multitudes, that no business or necessity could be admitted to the door, a poor paralytic was brought to be cured, and they were fain to "uncover the tiles of the house, and let him down in his bed with cords in the midst," before Jesus sitting in conference with the doctors. "When Jesus saw their faith, he said, Man, thy sins be forgiven thee." At which saying the pharisees being troubled, thinking it to be blasphemy, and that "none but God could forgive sins;" Jesus was put to verify his absolution: which he did in a just satisfaction and proportion to their understandings. For the Jews did believe that all afflictions were punishments for sin; "who sinned, this man or his Father, that he was born blind?" and that removing of the punishment was forgiving of the sin. And therefore Jesus, to prove that his sins were forgiven, removed that which they supposed to be the effect of his sin, and by curing the palsy prevented their farther murmur about the pardon. "That ye might know the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) arise, take up thy bed and walk. And the man arose, was healed, and glorified God."

18. A while after Jesus went again toward

the sea, and on his way, seeing Matthew the publican "sitting at the receipt of custom," he bade him follow him. Matthew first seated Jesus, and then became his disciple. But the pharisees that were with him began to be troubled that he "ate with publicans and sinners." For the office of the publican, though amongst the Romans it was honest and of great account, and "the flower of the Roman knights, the ornament of the city, the security of the commonwealth, were accounted to consist in the society of publicans;" yet amongst both the Jews and Greeks the name was odious, and the persons were accursed: not only because they were strangers that were the *chief* of them, who took to them some of the nation where they were employed; but because the Jews especially stood upon the charter of their nation and the privilege of their religion, that none of them should pay tribute; and also because they exercised great injustices and oppressions, having a power unlimited, and a covetousness wide as hell, and greedy as the fire or grave. But Jesus gave so fair an account concerning his converse with these persons, that the objection turned to be his apology: for he conversed with them because they were sinners; and it was as if a physician should be reproved for having so much to do with *sick* persons; for therefore was he "sent, not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance," to advance the reputation of mercy above the rites of sacrifice.

19. But as the little bubblings and gentle murmurs of the water are presages of a storm, and are more troublesome in their prediction than their violence, so were the arguings of the pharisees symptoms of a secret displeasure and an ensuing war; though at first represented in the civilities of question and scholastical discourses, yet they did but forerun vigorous objections and bold calumnies, which were the fruits of next summer. But as yet they dis-

coursed fairly, asking him "why John's disciples fasted often, but the disciples of Jesus did not fast." Jesus told them, it was because these were the days in which the bridegroom was come in person to espouse the church unto himself; and therefore for "the children of the bride-chamber to fast" then, was like bringing a dead corpse to the joys of a bride or the pomps of coronation; "the days should come, that the bridegroom should retire" into his chamber and draw the curtains, "and then they should fast in those days."

20. While Jesus was discoursing with the pharisees, Jairus, "a ruler of the synagogue, came to him," desiring he would help his daughter, who lay in the confines of death, ready to depart. Whither as he was going, a woman met him "who had been diseased with an issue of blood twelve years," without hope of remedy from art or nature; and therefore she runs to Jesus, thinking, without precedent, upon the confident persuasions of a holy faith, "that if she did but touch the hem of his garment, she should be whole." She came trembling, and full of hope and reverence, and "touched his garment, and immediately the fountain of her unnatural emanation was stopped," and reverted to its natural course and offices. St. Ambrose says, that this woman was Martha. But it is not likely that she was a Jewess, but a Gentile, because of that return which she made in memory of her cure, and honour of Jesus according to the Gentile rites. For Eusebius reports that he himself saw at Cesarea Philippi, a statue of brass representing a woman kneeling at the feet of a goodly personage, who held his hand out to her in a posture of granting her request, and doing favour to her; and the inhabitants said it was erected by the care and cost of this woman, adding (whether out of truth or superstition is not certain) that at the pedestal of this statue an usual plant did grow, which when it was

come up to that maturity and height as to arrive at the fringes of the brass monument, it was medicinal in many dangerous diseases. So far Eusebius. Concerning which story I shall make no censure but this, that since St. Mark and St. Luke affirm that this woman before her cure "had spent all her substance upon physicians," it is not easily imaginable how she should become able to spend so great a sum of money as would purchase two so great statues of brass. And if she could, yet it is still more unlikely that the Gentile princes and proconsuls, who searched all places public and private, and were curiously diligent to destroy all honorary monuments of Christianity, should let this alone; and that this should escape not only the diligence of the persecutors, but the fury of such wars and changes as happened in Palestine, and that for three hundred years together it should stand up in defiance of all violences and changeable fate of all things. However it be, it is certain that the book against images, published by the command of Charles the Great, eight hundred and fifty years ago, gave no credit to the story. And if it had been true, it is more than probable that Justyn Martyr, who was born and bred in Palestine; and Origen, who lived many years in Tyre, in the neighbourhood of the place where the statue is said to stand, and were highly diligent to heap together all things of advantage and reputation to the Christian cause, would not have omitted so notable an instance. It is therefore likely that the statues which Eusebius saw, and concerning which he heard such stories, were first placed there upon the stock of a heathen story or ceremony, and in process of time, for the likeness of the figures, and its capacity to be translated to the Christian story, was by the Christians in after ages attributed by a fiction of fancy, and afterwards by credulity confidently applied, to the present narrative.

21. "When Jesus was come to the ruler's house," he found the minstrels making their funeral noises for the death of Jairus's daughter, and the servants had met him, and acquainted him of "the death of the child;" yet Jesus turned out the minstrels, and "entered with the parents of the child into her chamber, and taking her by the hand called her," and awakened her from her sleep of death, and "commanded them to give her to eat," and enjoined them not to publish the miracle. But as flames suppressed by violent detentions break out and rage with more impetuous and rapid motion, so it happened to Jesus, who endeavouring to make the noises and reports of himself less popular, made them to be occuminal; for not only we do that most greedily from which we are most restrained, but a great merit, enamelled with humility, and restrained with modesty, grows more beauteous and florid, even up to the heights of wonder and glories.

22. As he came from Jairus's house, he cured two blind men upon their petition and confession, that they did believe in him; and cast out a dumb devil, so much to the wonder and amazement of the people, that the pharisees could hold no longer, (being ready to burst with envy,) but said, "he cast out devils by help of the devils." Their malice being, as usually as it is, contradictory to its own design, by its being unreasonable; nothing being more sottish than for the devil to divide his kingdom upon a plot; to ruin his certainties upon hopes future and contingent. But this was but the first eruption of their malice: all the year last past, which was the first year of Jesus's preaching, all was quiet, neither the Jews, nor the Samaritans, nor the Galileans did malign his doctrine or person, but he preached with much peace on all hands; for this was the year which the prophet Isaiah called in his prediction "the acceptable year of the Lord."

Interview between the Holy Jesus and the woman of Samaria.

1. When the Holy Jesus, perceiving it unsafe to be at Jerusalem, returned to Galilee, where the largest scene of his prophetic office was to be represented, he journeyed on foot through Samaria, and being weary and faint, hungry, and thirsty, he sat down by a well, and begged water of a Samaritan woman that was a sinner; who at first refused him with some incivility of language. But he, instead of returning anger and passion to her rudeness, which was commenced upon the interest of a mistaken religion, preached the coming of the Messiah to her, unlocked the secrets of her heart, and let in his grace, and made "a fountain of living water to spring up" in her soul, to extinguish the impure flames which had set her on fire, burning like hell ever since the death of her fifth husband, she then becoming a concubine to the sixth. Thus Jesus transplanted nature into grace, his hunger and thirst into religious appetites, the darkness of the Samaritan into a clear revelation, her sin into repentance and charity, and so quenched his own thirst by relieving her needs. And as "it was meat to him to do his Father's will," so it was drink to him to bring us to drink of the "fountain of living water." For thus God declared it to be a delight to him to see us live, as if he were refreshed by those felicities which he gives to us, as communications of his grace, and instances of mercy, and consignations to heaven. Upon which we can look with no eye but such as sees and admires the excellency of the divine charity, which being an emanation from the mercies and essential compassion of eternity, God cannot choose but rejoice in it, and love the works of his mercy, who was so well pleased in the works of his power. He that was de-

lighted in the creation, was highly pleased in the nearer conveyances of himself, when he sent the Holy Jesus to bear his image, and his mercies, and his glories, and offer them for the use and benefit of man. For this was the chief of the works of God, and therefore the blessed Master could not but be highest pleased with it, in imitation of his heavenly Father.

2. The woman observing our Saviour to have come with his face from Jerusalem, was angry at him upon the quarrel of the old schism. The Jews and the Samaritans had differing rites, and the zealous persons upon each side did commonly dispute themselves into uncharitableness: and so have Christians upon the same confidence, and zeal, and mistake. For although "righteousness hath no fellowship with unrighteousness, nor Christ with Belial;" yet the consideration of the crime of heresy, which is a spiritual wickedness, is to be separate from the person, who is material. That is, no spiritual communion is to be endured with heretical persons, when it is certain they are such, when they are convicted by competent authority and sufficient argument. But the persons of the men are to be pitied, to be reprov'd, to be regarded and convinced, to be wrought upon by fair complacences, and the offices of civility, and invited to the family of faith by the best arguments of charity, and the instances of a holy life; "having your conversation honest among them, that they may, beholding your good works, glorify God in the day of visitation. Indeed if there be danger, that is; a weak understanding may not safely converse in civil society with a subtle heretic; in such cases they are to be avoided, not seduced. But as this is only when the danger is by reason of the unequal capacities and strengths of the person; so it must be only when the article is *certainly* heresy, and the person criminal, and interest is the ingredient in the



persuasion, and a certain and a necessary truth destroyed by the opinion. We read that St. John, spying Cerinthus in a bath, refused to wash there where the enemy of God and of his Holy Son had been. This is a good precedent for us, when the case is equal. St. John could discern the spirit of Cerinthus, and his heresy was notorious, fundamental and highly criminal, and the apostle a person assisted up to infallibility. And possibly it was done by the whisper of a prophetic spirit, and a miraculous design; for immediately upon his retreat the bath fell down, and crushed Cerinthus in the ruins. But such acts of aversation as these, are not to be drawn readily into example, unless in the same or the parallel concurrence of equally-concluding accidents. We must not quickly, nor upon slight grounds, nor unworthy instances, call heretic; there had need be a long process and a high conviction, and a competent judge, and a necessary article, to be ingredients in such sad and decretory definitions, and in condemnation of a person or opinion. But if such instances occur, come not near the danger nor the scandal. And this advice St. Cyprian gave to the lay-people of his diocese. "Let them decline their discourses whose sermons creep and corrode like a canker; let there be no colloquies, no banquets, no commerce with such who are excommunicate and justly driven from the communion of the church." "For such persons (as St. Leo descants upon the apostle's expression of heretical discourses) creep in humbly, and with small and modest beginnings, they catch with flattery, they bind gently, and kill privily. Let therefore all persons, who are in danger, secure their persons and persuasions by removing far from the infection. And for the scandal, St. Hieronimide gave an heroic example, which in her persuasion, and the circumstances of the age and action, deserved the highest testimony of zeal, religious passion, and confident per-

suaſion. For she rather chose to die by the mandate of her tyrant father Leonigildus the Goth, than she would at the pascal solemnity receive the blessed sacrament at the hand of an Arian bishop.

But excepting these cases, which are not to be judged with forwardness, nor rashly taken measure of, we find that conversing charitably with persons of differing persuasions hath been instrumental to their conversion and God's glory. The believing wife may sanctify the unbelieving husband; and we find it verified in church story. St. Cecily converted her husband Valerianus; St. Theodora converted Simeon; St. Monica converted Patricius; and Theodelinda Agilulphus; St. Clotilda persuaded King Clodoveus to be a christian; and St. Natalia persuaded Adrianus to be a martyr. For they, having their conversation honest and holy amongst the unbelievers, shined like virgin tapers in the midst of an impure prison, and amused the eyes of the sons of darkness with the brightness of the flame. For the excellency of a holy life is the best argument of the inhabitation of God within the soul; and who will not offer up his understanding upon that altar, where a deity is placed as the president and author of religion? And this very intercourse of the Holy Jesus with the woman is abundant argument, that it were well we were not so forward to refuse communion with dissenting persons upon the easy and confident mistakes of a too-forward zeal. They that call heretic may themselves be the mistaken persons, and by refusing to communicate the civilities of hospitable entertainment may shut their doors upon truth, and their windows against light, and refuse to let salvation in. For sometimes ignorance is the only parent of our persuasions, and many times interest hath made an impure commixture with it, and so produced the issue.

4. The Holy Jesus gently insinuates his

discourses. "If thou hadst known what asks thee water, thou wouldst have asked of him." Oftentimes we know not the person that speaks, and we usually choose our doctrine by our affections to the man. But then, if we are uncivil upon the stock of that judice, we do not know that it is Christ, and our understandings to obedience, and our affections to duty and compliances. The woman little thought of the glories which stood right against her. He that sat ("thou") upon the well had a throne placed above the heads of cherubim. In his arms, who lay and rested himself, was the sanctuary of rest, where wearied souls were to lay their heads, and dispose their cares, and there turn them into joys, and to gild their throats with glory. That holy tongue which parched with heat streamed forth rivulets of holy doctrine, which were to water the world, and turn our deserts into paradises. Yet though he begged water at Jacob's well, Jacob drank at his. For at his charge Jacob's flocks and family were sustained, and, as he pronounced, all ways draw to him, just as we do, when we refuse to give drink to a thirsty disciple. Christ comes in that humble manner of address, under the veil of poverty and contempt, and we cannot see Christ from under that robe, and we send him away without alms; little considering, that when he begs of us in the instance of any of his poor relatives, he asks of us but to give us occasion to give him a blessing for an alms. Thus do the ministers of religion ask support; but

when the laws are not more just than many of the people are charitable, they shall fare as their master did; they shall preach, but, unless they can draw water themselves, they shall not drink.* but, *si scirent*, if men did but know who is it that asks them, that it is Christ either in his ministers, or Christ in his poor servants, certainly they could not be so obstructed in the issues of their justice and charity, but would remember that no honour could be greater, no love more fortunate, than to meet with an opportunity to be expressed in so noble a manner, that God himself is pleased to call his own relief.

5. When the disciples had returned from the town, whither they went to buy provision, they "wondered to see the master talking alone with a woman." They knew he never did so before; they had observed him to be of a reserved deportment, and not only innocent, but secure from the dangers of malice, and suspicion in the matter of incontinence. The Jews were a jealous and froward people. And as nothing will more blast the reputation of a prophet than effeminacy and wanton affections, so he knew no crime was sooner objected to, or harder cleared, than that. Of which, because commonly it is acted in privacy, men look for no proof, but pregnant circumstances and arguments of suspicious; so nothing can wash it off, until a man can prove a negative; and if he could, yet he is guilty enough in the estimate of the vulgar for having been accused. But then, because nothing is so destructive of the reputation of a governor, so contradictory to the authority and dignity of his person, as the low and baser appetites of uncleanness, and the consequent shame and scorn, (inasmuch that David, having fallen into it, prayed God

* "Sat thus," Chrysostom inquires what the particle "thus" signifies; and says, He sat not on a throne but on the earth. It sometimes is used in this sense, by ancient writers. Chrysostom's hint seems to have suggested Taylor's remarks.—Ed.

* Thus Taylor doubted the efficiency of "The voluntary principle." He, and those who agree with him, may be wrong in this matter, to a far greater extent than appears, now that this principle is a popular question. They are, however, wrong, in identifying all ministers with Christ.—Ed.

to confirm or establish him *spiritu principali* with the spirit of a prince, the spirit of lust being uningenuous and slavish) the Holy Jesus, who was to establish a new law in the authority of his person, was highly curious so to demean himself, that he might be a person incapable of any such suspicions, and of a temper apt not only to answer the calumny, but also to prevent the jealousy. But yet, now he had a great design in hand, he meant to reveal to the Samaritans the coming of the Messiah; and to this his discourse with the woman was instrumental. And in imitation of our great Master, spiritual persons and the guides of others have been very prudent and reserved in their societies and intercourse with women. Heretics have served their ends upon the impotency of the sex, and having "led captive silly women," led them about as triumphs of lust, and knew no scandal greater than the scandal of heresy, and therefore sought not to decline any, but were infamous in their unwary and lustful mixtures. Simon Magnus had his Helena, partner of his lust and heresy; the author of the sect of the Nicolaitans (if St. Hierom was not misinformed) had whole troops of women: Marcion sent a woman as his emissary to Rome; Apelles had his Philomene; Montanus, Prisca, and Maximilla: Donatus was served by Lucilla, Heliadius by Agape, Priscillian by Galla, and Arius spreads his nets by opportunity of his conversation with the prince's sister, and first he corrupted her, then he seduced the world.

6. But holy persons, preachers of true religion and holy doctrines, although they were careful by public Homilies to instruct the female disciples, that they who are "heirs together" with us of the same hope, may be servants in the same discipline and institution, yet they remitted them to their husbands and guardians to be taught at home. And when personal transactions concerning the needs of their spirit, were, by necessity, to intervene

between the priest and a woman, the action was done most commonly under public test; or if in private, yet with much caution and observation of circumstance, which might as well prevent suspicion as preserve their innocence. Conversation and frequent and familiar address do too much rattle the ligaments and reverence of spiritual authority, and, amongst the best persons, is matter of danger. When the cedars of Lebanon have been observed to fall, when David and Solomon have been dishonoured, he is a bold man that will venture farther than he is sent in an errand by necessity, or invited by charity, or warranted by prudence. I deny not but some persons have made holy friendships with women; St. Athanasius with a devout and religious virgin; St. Chrysostom with Olympie; St. Hierom with Paula Romana; St. John with the elect lady; St. Peter and St. Paul with Petronilla and Tecla. And, therefore, it were a jealousy, beyond the suspicion of monks and eunuchs, to think it impossible to have a chaste conversation with a distinct sex. First, A pure and right intention. Secondly, An intercourse not extended beyond necessity or holy ends. Thirdly, A short stay. Fourthly, Great modesty. Fifthly, And the business of religion, will, by God's grace, hallow the visit, and preserve the friendship spiritual, that it may not degenerate into carnal affection. And yet these are only advices useful, when there is danger in either of the persons, or some scandal incident to the profession, that to some persons and in the conjunction of many circumstances are oftentimes not considerable.

7. When Jesus had resolved to reveal himself to the woman, he first gives her occasion to reveal herself to him; fairly insinuating an opportunity to confess her sins, that, having purged herself from her impurity, she might be apt to entertain the article of the revelation of the Messiah. And, indeed, a crime in our

manners is the greatest indisposition of our understanding to entertain the truth and doctrine of the gospel : especially when the revelation contests against the sin, and professes open hostility to the lust. For faith being the gift of God, and an illumination, the spirit of God will not give this light to them that prefer their darkness before it ; for the will must open the windows, or the light of faith will not shine into the chamber of the soul. “ How can ye believe (said our blessed Saviour) that receive honour one of another ? ” Ambition and faith, believing God and seeking of ourselves, are incompetent and totally impossible. And therefore Serapion, Bishop of Thumis, spake like an angel, (saith Socrates) saying, “ that the mind which feedeth upon spiritual knowledge, must thoroughly be cleansed. The irascible faculty must first be cured with brotherly love and charity, and the concupiscible must be suppressed with continency and mortification.” Then may the understanding apprehend the mysteriousness of christianity. For since christianity is a holy doctrine, if there be any remanent affections to a sin, there is in the soul a party disaffected to the entertainment of the institution, and we usually believe what we have a mind to. Our understandings, if a crime be lodged in the will, being like jaundiced eyes, transmitting the species to the soul with prejudice, disaffection, and colours of their own framing. If a preacher should discourse, that there ought to be a parity amongst Christians, and that their goods ought to be in common, all men will apprehend that not princes and rich persons, but the poor and the servants would soonest become disciples, and believe the doctrines, because they are the only persons likely to get by them ; and it concerns the other not to believe him, the doctrine being destructive of their interests. Just such a persuasion is every persevering love to a vicious habit ; it

having possessed the understanding with fair opinions of it, and surprised the will with passion and desires, whatsoever doctrine is its enemy will with infinite difficulty be entertained. And we know a great experience of it in the article of the Messiah dying on the cross, which though infinitely true, yet because “ to the Jews it was a scandal, and to the Greeks foolishness,” it could not be believed, they remaining in that indisposition ; that is, unless the will were first set right, and they willing to believe any truth, though for it they must disclaim their interest. Their understanding was blind, because their heart was hardened, and could not receive the impression of the greatest moral demonstration in the world.

8. The Holy Jesus asked water of the woman ; unsatisfying water, but promised that to them who ask him, that he would give waters of life, and satisfaction infinite ; so distinguishing the pleasures and appetites of this world from desires and complacences spiritual. Here we labour, but receive no benefits ; we sow many times, and reap not ; or reap, and do not gather in ; or gather in, and do not possess ; or possess, but do not enjoy ; or if we enjoy, we are still unsatisfied, it being with anguish of spirit and circumstances of vexation. A great heap of riches make neither our clothes warm, nor our meat more nutritive, nor our beverage more pleasant ; and it feeds the eye, but never fills it, but, like drink to an hydropic person, increases the thirst, and promotes the torment. But the grace of God, though but like a grain of mustard seed, fills the furrows of the heart ; and as the capacity increases, itself grows up in equal degrees, and never suffers any emptiness or dissatisfaction, but carries content and fullness all the way ; and the degrees of augmentation are not steps and near approaches to satisfaction, but increasings of the capacity ; the soul is satisfied all the way, and receives more not because it wanted any, but that it can now

hold more, is more receptive of felicities; and in every minute of sanctification there is so excellent a condition of joy and high satisfaction, that the very calamities, the afflictions and persecutions of the world, are turned into felicities, by the activity of the prevailing ingredient; like a drop of water falling into a ton of wine, it is absorbed into a new family, losing its own nature by a conversion into the more noble. For now that all passionate desires are dead, and there is nothing remanent that is vexatious, the peace, the serenity, the quiet sleeps, the evenness of spirit and contempt of things below, remove the soul from all neighbourhood of displeasure, and place it at the foot of the throne, whither when it is ascended, it is possessed of felicities eternal. These were the waters which were given to us to drink, when, with the rod of God, the rock Christ Jesus was smitten. The spirit of God moves for ever upon these waters; and when the angel of the covenant hath stirred the pool, whoever descends hither shall find health and peace, joys spiritual, and the satisfactions of eternity.

THE PRAYER.

O Holy Jesus, fountain of eternal life, thou spring of joy and spiritual satisfactions, let the holy stream of blood and water issuing from thy sacred side cool the thirst, soften the hardness, and refresh the barrenness of my desert soul; that I thirsting after thee, as the wearied hart after the cool stream, may despise all the vain complacences of this world; refuse all pleasures but such as are safe, pious, and charitable; mortify all sottish appetites, and may desire nothing but thee, seek none but thee,

and rest in thee with entire dedication of my own cautive inclinations; that the desires of nature may pass into desires of grace, and my thirst and my hunger may be spiritual, and my hopes placed in thee, and the expresses of my charity upon thy relatives, and all the parts of my life may speak thy love and obedience to thy commandments. That thou possessing my soul and all its faculties during my whole life, I may possess thy glories in the fruition of a blessed eternity; by the light of thy gospel here and the streams of thy grace being guided to Thee, the fountain of life and glory, there to be inebriated with the waters of paradise, with joy and love, and contemplation, adoring and admiring the beauties of the Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

Considerations upon Christ's first Preaching.

1. "When John was cast into prison, then began Jesus to preach;" not only because the ministry of John, by order of divine designation, was to precede the publication of Jesus, but also upon prudent considerations and designs of providence, lest two great personages at once upon the theatre of Palestine might have been occasion of divided thoughts, and these have determined upon a schism; some professing themselves to be of Christ, some of John. For once an offer was made of a dividing question by the spite of the Pharisees; "why do the disciples of John fast often, and thy disciples fast not?" But when John went off from the scene, then Jesus appeared like the sun in succession to the morning star, and there were no divided interests upon mistake, or the fond adherences of the followers. And although the Holy Jesus would certainly have cured all ac-

cidental inconveniences which might have happened in such accidents, yet this may become a precedent to all prelates, to be prudent in avoiding all occasions of a schism, and rather than divide a people, submit and relinquish an opportunity of preaching to their inferiors, as knowing that God is better served by charity than a homily; and if my modesty made me resign to my inferior, the advantages of honour to God by the cession of humility are of greater consideration than the smaller and accidental advantages of better penned and more accurate discourses. But our blessed Lord, designing to gather disciples, did it in the manner of the more extraordinary persons and doctors of the Jews, and particularly of the Baptist; he initiated them into the institution by the solemnity of a baptism, but he was yet pleased not to minister it to his own person. His apostles were baptized in John's baptism, said Tertullian; or else, St. Peter was only baptized by his Lord, and he baptized the rest. However, the Lord was pleased to depute the ministry of his servants, that so he might constitute a ministry; that he might reserve it to himself as a speciality to baptize with the Spirit, as his servants did with water; that he might declare that the efficacy of the rite did not depend upon the dignity of the minister, but his own institution, and the holy covenant; and lastly, lest they who were baptized by him in person might plume themselves above their brethren whose needs were served by a lower ministry.

2. The Holy Jesus, the great physician of our souls, now entering upon his cure and the diocese of Palestine, which was afterwards enlarged to the pale of the catholic church, was curious to observe all advantages of prudence for the benefit of souls, by the choice of place, by quitting the place of his education, (which because it had been poor and humble, was apt to procure contempt to his doctrine and despite to his person) by fixing

in Capernaum, which had the advantage of popularity, and the opportunity of extending the benefit, yet had not the honour and ambition of Jerusalem; that the ministers of religion might be taught to seek and desire employment in such circumstances which may serve the end of God, but not of ambition; to promote the interest of souls, but not the inordination of lower appetites. Jesus quitted his natural and civil interests, when they were less consistent with the end of God and his prophetic office, and considered not his mother's house and the vicinage, in his accounts of religion, beyond those other places in which he might better do his Father's work. In which a forward piety might behold the intimation of a duty to persons, who by rights of law and custom were so far instrumental to the cure of souls, as to design the persons; they might do the duty if they first considered the interests of souls *before* the advantages of their kindred and relatives. And, although, if all things else be alike, they may, in equal dispositions, prefer their own before strangers, yet it were but reason, that they should first consider solemnly if the men be equal, before they remember that they are of their kindred, and not less this consideration be ingredient into the former judgment. And another degree of liberty yet, there is; if our kindred be persons apt and holy, and without exceptions either of law, or prudence, or religion, we may do them advantages before others who have some degrees of learning and improvement beyond them: or else no man might lawfully prefer his kindred, unless they were absolutely the ablest in a diocese or kingdom; which doctrine were a snare apt to produce scruples to the conscience, rather than advantages to the cure. But then also patrons should be careful that they do not account their clerks by an estimate taken from comparison with unworthy candidates, set up on

purpose, that when we choose our kindred we may abuse our consciences by saying, We have fulfilled our trust, and made election of the more worthy. In these and the like cases, let every man who is concerned deal with justice, nobleness, and sincerity, with the simplicity of a Christian and the wisdom of a man, without tricks and stratagems, to disadvantage the church by doing temporal advantages to his friend or family.

3. Jesus now having begun his preaching, began also to gather his family; and first called Simon and Andrew, then James and John; at whose vocation he wrought a miracle, which was a signification of their office and the success of it: a draught of fishes so great and prodigious, that it convinced them that he was a person very extraordinary, whose voice the fishes heard, and came at his call: and since he designed them to become "fishers of men," although themselves were as unlikely instruments to persuade men as the voice of the Son of man to command fishes, yet they should prevail with such great numbers, that the whole world should run after them, and upon their summons come into the net of the gospel, becoming disciples of the glorious Nazarene. St. Peter the first time that he threw his net, on the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, caught three thousand men; and at one sermon sometimes the princes of a nation have been converted, and the whole land presently baptized; and the multitudes so great, that the apostles were forced to designate some men to the ministration of baptism by way of peculiar office; and it grew to be work enough; the easiness of the ministry being made busy and full of employment where a whole nation became disciples. And indeed the doctrine is so holy, the principle so divine, the instruments so supernatural, the promises so glorious, the revelations so admirable, the rites so mysterious, the whole fabric of the discipline so full

of wisdom, persuasion, and energy, that the infinite number of the first conversions were not so a great a wonder, as that there are so few now: every man calling himself Christian, but few having that power of godliness which distinguishes Christian from a word and an empty name. And the word is now the same, and the arguments greater, (for some have been growing ever since, as the prophecies have been fulfilled) and the sermons more, and the Spirit the same; and yet such diversity of operations, that we hear and read the sermons and dictates evangelical as we do a romance; but that it is with less passion, or altogether as much unconcerned as with a story of Salmanasar or Ibrahim Bassa. For we do not leave one vice, nor reject one lust, nor deny one impetuous temptation the more for the four gospels' sake, and all St. Paul's epistles mingled in the argument. And yet all think themselves fishes within Christ's net, and the prey of the gospel: and it is true they are so; for "the kingdom is like unto a net, which enclosed fishes good and bad;" but this shall be of small advantage when the net shall be drawn to the shore, and the separation made.

4. When Jesus called those disciples, they had been "fishing all night, and caught nothing;" but when Christ bade them let down the net, they took multitudes: to shew to us, that the success of our endeavours is not in proportion to our labours, but to the divine assistance and benediction. It is not the excellency of the instrument, but the capacity of the subject, nor yet this alone, but the aptness of the application, nor that without an influence from heaven, can produce the fruits of a holy persuasion and conversion. "Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God gives the increase." Indeed when we let down the nets at the divine appointment, the success is the more probable: and certainly God will bring benefit to the place, or honour to him-

self, or salvation to them that will obey, or conviction to them that will not. But whatever the fruit be in respect of others, the reward shall be great to themselves. And therefore St. Paul did not say he had profited, but, "he had laboured more than they all," as knowing the divine acceptance would take its account in proportion to our endeavours and intentions; not by commensuration to the effect, which, being without us, and depending upon God's blessing and the co-operation of the recipients, can be no ingredients into our account. But this also may help to support the weariness of our hopes, and the protraction and deferring of our expectation, if a laborious prelate and an assiduous preacher have but few returns to his many cares and greater labours. A whole night a man may labour, (the longest life is no other) and yet catch nothing, and then the Lord may visit us with his special presence, and more forward assistances, and the harvest may grow up with the swiftness of a gourd, and the fruitfulness of olives, and the plausance of the vine, and strength of wheat; and whole troops of penitents may arise from the darkness of their graves at the call of one sermon, when he pleases: and till then we must be content that we do our duty, and lay the consideration of the effect at the feet of Jesus.

5. In the days of the patriarchs the governors of the Lord's people were called shepherds; so was Moses, and so was David. In the days of the gospel they are shepherds still, but with the addition of a new appellative, for now they are called fishers. Both the callings were honest, humble, and laborious, watchful and full of trouble; but now that both the titles are conjunct, we may observe the symbol of an implicit and folded duty. There is much simplicity and care in the shepherd's trade; there is much craft and labour in the fishers: and a prelate is to be both full of piety to his flock, and careful of their welfare; and, because

in the political and spiritual sense too, feeding and governing are the same duty, it concerns them that have cure of souls to be discreet and wary, observant of advantages, laying such baits for the people as may entice them into the nets of Jesus's discipline. "But being crafty I caught you," saith St. Paul; for he was a fisher too. And so must spiritual persons be fishers in all spiritual senses of watchfulness and care and prudence. Only they must not fish for preferment and ambitious purposes, but must say with the king of Sodom, *dote nobis animas, cetera vobis tollite*; which St. Paul renders, "we seek not yours, but you." And in order to such acquisition, the purchase of souls, let them have the diligence and the craft of fishers, the watchfulness and care of shepherds, the prudence of politicians, the tenderness of parents, the spirit of government, the wariness of observation, great knowledge of the dispositions of their people, and experience of such advantages by means of which they may serve the ends of God, and of salvation upon their souls.

6. When Peter had received the fruits of a rich miracle in the prodigious and prosperous draught of fishes, he instantly fell down at the feet of Jesus, and confessed himself a sinner, and unworthy of the presence of Christ. In which confession I not only consider the conviction of his understanding, by the testimony of the miracle; but the modesty of his spirit, which in his exaltation, and the joy of a sudden and happy success, retired into humility and consideration of his own unworthiness, lest, as it happens in sudden joys, the lavishness of his spirit should transport him to intemperance, to looser affections, to vanity and garishness, unbecoming the severity and government of a disciple of so great a master. For in such great, and sudden accidents men usually are dissolved and melted into joy and inconsideration, and let fly all their severe principles and discipline of

manners, till, as Peter here did, though to another purpose, they say to Christ, "depart from me, O Lord;" as if such excellences of joys, like the lesser stars, did disappear at the presence of him who is the fountain of all joys regular and just. When the spirits of the body have been bound up by the cold winter air, the warmth of the spring makes so great an aperture of the passages, and by consequence such dissolution of spirits, in the presence of the sun, that it becomes the occasion of fevers and violent diseases. Just such a thing is a sudden joy, in which the spirits leap out from their cells of austerity and sobriety, and are warmed into fevers and wildnesses, or forfeiture of all judgment and vigorous understanding. In these accidents the best advice is to temper and allay our joys, with some instant consideration of the vilest of our sins, the shamefulness of our disgraces, the most dolorous accidents of our lives, the worst our fears; with meditation of death, or terrors of doomsday, or the unimaginable miseries of damned and accursed spirits. For such considerations as these are good instruments of sobriety, and are correctives to the malignity of excessive joys or temporal prosperities; which, like minerals, unless modified by art, prey upon the spirits, and become the union of a contradiction, being turned into mortal poisons.

7. At this time "Jesus preached to the people from the ship," which in the fancies and tropical discoursings of the old doctors, signifies the church, and declares that the homilies of order and authority must be delivered from the oracle; they that preach must be sent, and God hath appointed tutors and instructors of our consciences, by special designation and peculiar appointment: if they that preach do not make their sermons from the ship, their discourses ~~either~~ are the false murmurs of heretics and false shepherds, or else of thieves and invaders of authority, or corrupters of discipline and order.

For God who loves to hear us in special places, will also be heard himself by special persons, and since he sent his angels as ministers to convey his purposes of old, when the law was ordained by angels, as by the hands of a Mediator, now also he will send his servants the sons of men, since the new law was ordained by the Son of man, who is the mediator between God and man in the new covenant. And, therefore, in the ship Jesus preached; but he had first caused it "to put off from land;" to represent to us, that the ship in which we preach must be put off from the vulgar communities of men, separate from the people, by the designation of special appointment and of special holiness; that is, they neither must be common men, nor of common lives, but consecrated by order, and hallowed by holy living, lest the person want authority in destitution of a divine character, and his doctrine loose its energy and power when the life is vulgar, and hath nothing in it holy and extraordinary.

8. The holy Jesus in the choice of his apostles was resolute, and determined to make election of persons bold and confident; for so the Galileans were observed naturally to be; and Peter was the boldest of the twelve, and a good swordsman, till the spirit of his master had fastened his sword within the scabbard, and charmed his spirit into quietness; but he never choose any of the scribes and pharisees, none of the doctors of the law, but persons ignorant and unlearned, which, in design and institutions whose divinity is not demonstrated from other arguments, would seem an art of concealment and distrust. But in this, which derives its rays from the fountain of wisdom, most openly and infallibly, it is a contestation against the powers of the world upon the interests of God, that he who does all the work might have all the glory, and in the productions in which he is fain to make the instruments themselves, and give them capacity and activity, every part of the opera-

tion and causality and effect may give to God the same honour he had from the creation, for his being the only workman ; with the addition of those degrees of excellency which in the work of redemption of man are beyond that of his creation and first being.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal Jesu. Lord of the creatures, and prince of the catholic church, whom all creatures obey in acknowledgment of thy supreme dominion, and all according to thy disposition co-operate in the advancement of thy kingdom, be pleased to order the affairs and events of the world, that all things in their capacity may do the work of the gospel, and co-operate to the good of the elect, and retrench the growth of vice, and advance the interests of virtue. Make all states and orders of men disciples of thy holy institution : let princes worship thee and defend religion ; let thy clergy do thee honour by personal zeal, and vigilancy over their flocks ; let all the world submit to thy sceptre, and praise thy righteousness, and adore thy judgments, and revere thy laws : and in the multitudes of thy people within the enclosure of thy nets let me also communicate in the offices of a strict and religious duty, that I may know thy voice, and obey thy call, and entertain thy Holy Spirit, and improve my talents ; that I may also communicate in the blessings of the church : and when the nets shall be drawn to the shore, and the angels shall make separation of the good fishes from the bad, I may not be rejected, or thrown into those seas of fire which shall afflict the enemies of thy kingdom, but be admitted into the societies of saints, and the everlasting communion of thy blessings and glories, O blessed and eternal Jesu. Amen.

DISCOURSE IX.

Of Repentance.

1. THE whole doctrine of the gospel is comprehended by the Holy Ghost in these two summaries, "Faith and Repentance;" that those two potent and imperious faculties which command our lower powers, which are the fountain of actions, the occasion and capacity of laws, and the title to reward or punishment, the will and the understanding, that is, the whole man considered in his superior faculties, may become subjects of the kingdom, servants of Jesus, and heirs of glory. Faith supplies our imperfect conceptions, and corrects our ignorance, making us to distinguish good from evil, not only by the proportions of reason, and custom, and old laws, but by the new standard of the gospel. It teaches us all those duties which were enjoined to us in order to a participation of mighty glories ; it brings our understanding into subjection, making us apt to receive the Spirit for our guide, Christ for our master, the gospel for our rule, the laws of Christianity for our measure of good and evil : and it supposes us naturally ignorant, and comes to supply those defects which, in our understandings, were left after the spoils of innocence and wisdom made in paradise upon Adam's prevarication, and continued and increased by our neglect, evil customs, voluntary deceptions, and infinite prejudices. And as faith presupposes our ignorance, so repentance presupposes our malice and iniquity. The whole design of Christ's coming, and of the doctrines of the gospel, being to recover us from a miserable condition, from ignorance to spiritual wisdom by the conduct of faith : and from a vicious habitually-depraved life and ungodly manner to the purity of the sons of God, by the instrument of repentance.

2. And this is a loud publication of the excellency and glories of the gospel and the felicities of man, over all the other instances of creation. The angels, who were more excellent spirits than human souls, were not comprehended and made safe within a covenant and provision of repentance. Their first act of volition was their whole capacity of a blissful or a miserable eternity: they made their own sentence, when they made their first election; and having such excellent knowledge, and no weaknesses to prejudge and trouble their choice, what they first did was not capable of repentance; because they had at first, in their intuition and sight, all which could afterward *bring* them to repentance. But weak man, who knows first by elements, and after long study learns a *syllable*, and in good time gets a *word*, could not at first know all those things which were sufficient or apt to determine his choice; but, as he grew to understand more, saw more reasons to rescind his first elections. The angels had a full peremptory will, and a satisfied understanding at first, and therefore were not to mend their first act by a second contradictory. But poor man, hath a will, always strongest when his understanding is weakest, and chooseth most when he is least able to determine; and therefore is most passionate in his desires, and follows his object with greatest earnestness, when he is blindest, and hath the least reason so to do. And therefore God, pitying man, begins to reckon his choices to be criminal, just in the same degree as he gives him understanding. The violences and unreasonable actions of childhood are no more remembered by God, than they are understood by the child. The levities and passions of youth are not aggravated by the imputation of malice; but are sins of a lighter dye, because reason is not yet impressed and marked upon them with characters and tincture in grain. But he who (when he may choose because he understands)

shall choose the evil and reject the good, stands marked with a deep guilt, and hath no excuse left to him, but as his degrees of ignorance left his choice the more imperfect. And because every sinner, in the style of Scripture, is a "fool," and hath an election as imperfect as is the action; that is, as great a declension from prudence as it is from piety, and the man understands as imperfectly as he practises; therefore God sent his Son to "take upon him (not the nature of angels, but) the seed of Abraham," and to propound salvation upon such terms as were possible; that is, upon such a piety as relies upon experience, and trial of good and evil; and hath given us leave, if we choose amiss at first, to choose again, and choose better; Christ having undertaken to pay for the issues of our first follies, to make up the breach made by our weaknesses and abused understandings.

3. But as God gave us this mercy by Christ, so he also revealed it by him. He first used the authority of a Lord, and a Creator, and a Lawgiver: he required obedience, indeed, upon reasonable terms, upon the instance of but a few commandments at first, which, when he afterwards multiplied, he also appointed ways to expiate the smaller irregularities: but left *them* eternally bound without remedy who should do any great violence or a crime. But then he bound them but to a temporal death. Only thus; as an eternal death was also tacitly implied, so also a remedy was secretly ministered, and repentance particularly preached by humiliations distinct from the covenant of Moses' law. The law allowed no repentance for greater crimes; "he that was convicted of adultery was to die without mercy:" but God pitied the miseries of man, and the inconveniences of the law, and sent Christ to suffer for the one, and remedy the other; "for so it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead, that repentance and remission of sins should be

*preached in his name among all nations." And now is the last and only hope of man, who in his natural condition is imperfect, in his customs vicious, in his habits impotent and criminal. Because man did not remain innocent, it became necessary he should be penitent; and, that this penitence should by some means be made acceptable; that is, become the instrument of his pardon, and restitution of his hope. Which, because it is an act of favour, and depends wholly upon the Divine will, and was revealed to us by Jesus Christ, who was made not only the prophet and preacher, but the Mediator of this new covenant and mercy; it was necessary we should become disciples of the holy Jesus, and servants of his institution; that is, run to him to be made partakers of the mercies of this new covenant, and accept of him such conditions as he should require of us.

4. I consider that repentance, as it is described in scripture, is a system of holy duties, not of one kind, not properly consisting of parts as if it were a single grace; but it is the reparation of that estate into which Christ first puts us; "a renewing us in the spirit of our mind," as the apostle calls it; and the Holy Ghost hath taught this truth to us by the implication of many appellatives, and also by express discourses. For there is in scripture a "repentance to be repented of," and "a repentance never to be repented of." The first is mere sorrow for what is past, an ineffective trouble producing nothing good; such as was the repentance of Judas, he repented, and hanged himself; and such was that of Esau, when it was too late; and so was the repentance of the five foolish virgins: which examples tells us also when ours is an impertinent and ineffectual repentance. To this repentance pardon is nowhere promised in scripture. But there is a repentance which is called conversion or amendment of life, a repentance productive of holy fruits, such as the Baptist and our

blessed Saviour preached, such as himself also propounded in the example of the Ninevites; they repented at the preaching of Jonah, that is, "they fasted, they covered them in sackcloth, they cried mightily unto God, yea, they turned every one from his evil way, and from the violence that it was their hands." And this was it, that appeased God in that instance. "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil; and did it not."

5. The same character of repentance we find in the prophet Ezekiel: "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right; If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he hath done that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die." And in the gospel, repentance is described with as full and entire comprehensions as in the old prophets. For faith and repentance are the whole duty of the gospel. Faith signifies the submission of the understanding to the institution; and repentance includes that whole practice, which is the entire duty of a Christian after he hath been overtaken in a fault. And therefore repentance first includes a renunciation and abolition of all evil, and then also enjoins a pursuit of every virtue; and that, till they arrive at an habitual confirmation.

6. Of the first sense are all those expressions of scripture which imply repentance to be the deletory of sins. Repentance from dead works St. Paul affirms to be the prime fundamental of the religion, that is, conversion or returning from dead works: for unless repentance be so construed, it is not good sense. And this is therefore highly verified, because repentance is intended to set us into the condition of our first undertaking and articles covenanted with God. And therefore it is "a redemption of

the time," that is, a recovering what we lost and making it up by our doubled industry. "Remember whence thou art fallen, and repent;" that is, return, "and do thy first works," said the Spirit to the angel of the church of Ephesus; or else "I will remove thy candlestick except thou repent." It is a restitution; "If a man be overtaken in a fault, restore such a one," that is, put him where he was. And then, that repentance also implies a doing all good, is certain by the sermon of the Baptist, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance." "Do thy first works," was the sermon of the Spirit. "Laying aside every weight, and the sin that easily encircles us, let us run with patience the race that is set before us," so St. Paul taught. And St. Peter gives charge, that when we "have escaped the corruptions of the world and of lust, besides this, we are to give all diligence to acquire the rosary and conjugation of christian virtues." And they are proper effects, or rather constituent parts, of a holy repentance. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance," saith St. Paul, "not to be repented of." And that ye may know what is signified by repentance, behold the product was "carefulness, clearing of themselves, indignation, fear, vehement desires, zeal, and revenge; to which if we add the epithet of holy, (for these were the results of a godly sorrow, and the members of a repentance not to be repented of) we are taught that repentance, besides the purging out the malice of iniquity, is also a sanctification of the whole man, a turning nature into grace, passions into reason, and the flesh into spirit.

7. To this purpose I reckon those phrases of scripture calling it a "renewing of our minds, a renewing of the Holy Ghost, a cleansing of our hands and purifying our hearts," that is, becoming holy in our actions, a transformation of our nature, a crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts, a mortified state, a purging

out the old leaven, and becoming a new lump, a waking out of sleep, and walking honestly as in the day, a being born again, and being born from above, a new life. And I consider that these preparative actions of repentance, such as sorrow, and confession of sins, and fasting, and exterior mortifications and severities, are but forerunners of repentance, some of the retinue, and they are of the family; but they no more complete the duty of repentance than the harbingers are the whole court, or than the fingers, are all the body. "There is more joy in heaven," said our blessed Saviour, "over one sinner that repenteth, than over the ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance." There is no man but needs a fear and a sorrow even for his daily weaknesses, and possibly they are the *instrumental* expiations of our sudden and frequent and lesser surprises of imperfection; but the "just persons need no repentance," that is, need no inversion of state, no transformation from condition to condition, but from the less to the more perfect the best man hath. And therefore those are vain persons who when they "owe God a hundred will write fourscore, or a thousand will write fifty." It was the saying of Hierocles, that "Repentance is the beginning of philosophy, a flight and renunciation of evil works and words, and the first preparation and entrance into a life which is never to be repented of. And therefore a penitent is not taken with unbrages and appearances, nor quits a real good for an imaginary, nor chooses evil for fear of enemies and adverse accidents; but peremptorily conforms his sentence to the divine laws, and submits his whole life in a conformity with them." He that said those excellent words had not been taught the Christian institution, but it was admirable reason and deep philosophy, and most consonant to the reasonableness of virtue, and the proportions and designs of repentance, and no other than the doctrine of Christian philosophy.

8. And it is considerable, since in Scripture there is a repentance mentioned which is impertinent and ineffectual as to the obtaining pardon; a repentance implied which is to be repented of; and another expressed which is never to be repented of, and this is described to be a new state of life, a whole conversion and transformation of the man; it follows, that whatsoever in any sense can be called repentance, and is less than this new life, must be that *ineffective* repentance. A sorrow is a repentance, and all the acts of dolorous expression are but the same sorrow in other characters, and they are good when they are parts or instruments of the *true* repentance: but when they are the whole repentance, that repentance is no better than that of Judas, nor more prosperous than that of Esau. Every sorrow is not a godly sorrow; and that which is, is but instrumental and in order to repentance. Godly sorrow worketh repentance, saith St. Paul; that is, does its share towards it, as every grace does toward the pardon, as every degree of pardon does toward heaven. By godly sorrow it is probable St. Paul means the same thing which the schoolmen hath since called contrition; a grief proceeding from a holy principle, from our love of God, and anger that we have offended him: and yet this is a great way off from that repentance, without the performance of which we shall certainly perish. But no contrition alone is remissive of sins, but as it co-operates towards the integrity of our duty. *Cum conversus ingemuerit*, is the prophet's expression. When a man "mourns and turns from all his evil way," that is a godly sorrow, and that is repentance too. But the tears of a dolorous person, though running over with great effusions, and shed in great bitterness, and expressed in actions of punitive justice, all being but the same sense in louder language, being nothing but the expressions of sorrow, are good only as they

tend farther; and if they do, they may by degrees bring us to repentance, and that repentance will bring us to heaven; but of themselves they may as well make the sea swell beyond its margin, or water and refresh the sun-burnt earth, as move God to mercy and pierce the heavens. But then, to this consideration we may add, that a sorrow upon a death-bed, after a vicious life, is such as cannot easily be understood to be ordinarily so much as the beginning of virtue, or the first advance towards a holy life. For he that, till then, retained his sins, and now when he is certain and believes he shall die, or is fearful lest he should, is sorrowful that he hath sinned, is only sorrowful because he is likely to perish; such a sorrow may perfectly consist with as great an affection to sin as ever the man had in the highest caresses and invitation of his lust.* For even then, in certain circumstances, he would have refused to have acted his greatest temptation. The boldest and most pungent lust would refuse to be satisfied in the marketplace, or with a dagger at his heart; and the greatest intemperance would refuse a pleasant meal, if he believed the meat to be mixed with poison: and yet this restraint of appetite is no abatement of the affection, any more than the violent fears which by being incumbent upon the death-bed penitent make him grieve for the evil consequences more than hate the malice and irregularity. He that does not grieve till his greatest fear presses him hard, and damnation treads upon his heels, feels, indeed, the effects of fear, but can have no present benefit of his sorrow, because it had no natural principle, but a violent, unnatural, and intolerable cause, inconsistent with a free, placid, and moral election. But this I speak only by way of caution: for God's mercy is infinite, and can, if he please, make it otherwise. But it is not good to venture, *unless* you have a promise.

9. The same also I consider concerning the purpose of a *new* life, which, that any man should judge to be repentance, that duty which *restores* us, is more *unreasonable* than to think sorrow will do it. For as a man may sorrow, and yet never be restored, (and he may sorrow so much the more, because he shall never be restored, as Esau did, as the five foolish virgins did, and as many more do,) so he that purposes to lead a new life hath acknowledged that the duty is undone, and therefore his pardon is not granted, nor his condition restored. As a letter is not a word, nor a word an action; as an embryo is not a man, nor the seed the fruit; so is a *purpose* of obedience but the element of repentance, the first imaginations of it, differing from the grace *itself* as a disposition from a habit, or (because *itself* will best express *itself*) as the purpose does from the act. For, either a holy life is necessary, or it is not necessary. If it be not, why does any man hope to "escape the wrath to come" by resolving to do an unnecessary thing? or if he does not purpose it, when he pretends he does, that is mocking God; and that is a great way from being an instrument of his restitution. But if a holy life be necessary, as it is certain by infinite testimonies of Scriptures, it is the *unum necessarium*, the one great necessary; it cannot reasonably be thought any thing less than doing it shall serve our turn. That which is only in purpose is not yet done, and yet it is necessary it should be done, because it is necessary we should purpose it. And in this we are sufficiently concluded by that ingeminate expression used by St. Paul: "In Jesus Christ nothing can avail but a new creature; nothing but faith working by love; nothing but a keeping the commandments of God. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy: they are the Israel of God."

10. This consideration I intend to oppose

against the carnal security of death-bed penitents, who have (it is to be feared) spent a vicious life, who have therefore mocked themselves, because they meant to mock God: they would reap what they sowed not. "But be not deceived," saith the apostle, "he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Only this, "Let us not be weary of well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not:" meaning, that by a persevering industry, and a long work, and a succession of religious times, we must sow to the Spirit; a work of such length, that the greatest danger is of fainting and intermission. But he that sows to the Spirit, not being weary of well-doing, not fainting in the long process, he, and he only shall reap life everlasting. But a purpose is none of all this. If it comes to act, and be productive of a holy life, then it is useful, and it was like the eve of a holiday, festival in the midst of its abstinence and vigils: it was the beginnings of a repentance. But if it never come to act, it was to no purpose; a mocking of God, an act of direct hypocrisy, a provocation of God, and a deceiving of our own selves. You are unhappy you began not early, or that your earlier days return not together with your good purposes.

11. And neither can this have any other sentence, though the purpose be made upon our death-bed. For God hath made no covenant with us on our death-bed, distinct from that he made with us in our life and health. And since in our life and present abilities, good purposes and resolutions, and vows (for they are but the same thing in differing degrees) did signify nothing, till they came to act; and no man was reconciled to God by good intentions, but by doing the will of God: can we imagine that such purposes can more prevail at the *end* of a wicked life than at the

beginning? that less piety will serve our turns after fifty or sixty years impiety, than after but five or ten? that a wicked and sinful life should by less pains be expiated than an unhappy year? For it is not in the state of grace as in other exterior actions of religion or charity, where God will accept the will for the deed, when the external act is positively out of our powers, and may also be supplied by the internal: as bendings of the body, by the the prostration of the soul; alms, by charity; preaching, by praying for conversion. These things are necessary, because they are precepts, and obligatory only in certain circumstances, which may fail, and we be innocent and exempt. But it is otherwise in the essential parts of our duty, which God hath made the immediate and next condition of our salvation, such are never out of our power but by our own fault. Such are charity, forgiveness, repentance, and faith; such to which we are assisted by God, such which are always put by God's grace into our power, because God indispensably demands them. In these cases, as there is no revelation, God will accept the will for the deed, the purpose for the act. So it is unreasonable to expect, because God did once put it into our power, and, if we put it out, we must not complain of want of fire, which ourselves have quenched, nor complain we cannot see, when we have put our own lights out; and hope God will accept the will for the deed, since we had no will to it when God put it into our power. These are but fig-leaves, to cover the nakedness which our sin hath introduced.

12. For either the reducing such vows and purposes to action is the duty, without which the purposes is ineffectual; or else that practice is but the sign and testimony of a sincere intention, and that very sincere intention was of itself accepted by God in the first spring. If it was nothing but a sign, then the covenant which God made with man in Jesus Christ

was faith and good meaning, not faith and repentance, and a man is justified as soon as ever he purposes well, before any endeavours are commenced, or any act produced, or habit ratified; and the duties of a holy life are but shadows and significations of a grace, no part of the covenant, not so much as smoke is of fire, but a mere sign of a person justified as soon as he made his vow: but then also, a man may be justified five hundred times in a year, as often as he makes a new vow and confident resolution, which is then done most heartily, when the lust is newly satisfied, and and the pleasure disappears for the instant, though the purpose disbands upon the next temptation. Yea, but unless it be a sincere purpose, it will do no good; and although we cannot discern it, nor the man himself, yet God knows the heart, and if he sees it would have been reduced to act, then he accepts it. and this is all the hope of a dying man. But faint it is, and dying as the man himself.

13. For it is impossible for us to know but that what a man intends (as himself thinks) heartily, is sincerely meant, and if that may be insincere, and is to be judged only by a never-following event, (in case the man dies) it cannot become to any man the ground of hope: nay, even to those persons who do mean sincerely it is still an instrument of distrust and fears infinite, since his own sincere meaning hath nothing in the nature of the thing, no distinct formality, no principle, no sign to distinguish it from the insincere vows of sorrowful, but not truly penitent, persons. Secondly, a purpose acted and not acted differ not in the principle, but in the effect, which is extrinsical and accidental to the purpose, and each might be without the other. A man might live holily, though he had not made that vow; and when he hath made the vow, he may fail of living holily. And as we should think it hard measure to have a damnation increased upon us for

those sins which we would have committed if we had lived; so it cannot be reasonable to build our hopes of heaven upon an imaginary piety, which we never did, and, if we had lived, God knows whether we would or not. Thirdly, God takes away the godly, lest malice should corrupt their understandings, and "for the elects' sake those days are shortened, which if they should continue, no flesh should escape." But now, shall all that be laid upon their score, which, if God had not so prevented by their death, God knows they *would* have done? And God deals with the wicked in a proportionable manner, to the contrary purpose; he shortens their days, and takes away their possibilities and opportunities, when the time of repentance is *past*, because he will not do violence to their wills; and this "lest they should return, and be converted, and I should heal them." So that it is evident, some persons are by some acts of God, after a vicious life and the frequent rejection of the divine grace, at last prevented from mercy, who, without such courses and in contrary circumstances, might possibly do acts of repentance, and "and return, and then God would heal them."

14. Concerning all the other acts which it is to be supposed a dying person can do, I have only this consideration. If they can make up a new creature, become a new state, be in any sense a holy life, a keeping the commandments of God, a following of peace and holiness, a becoming holy in all conversation; if they can arrive to the *lowest* sense of that excellent condition Christ intended to all his disciples, not "crying Lord, Lord, but doing the will of God;" if he that hath served the lusts of the flesh and taken pay under all God's enemies during a long and malicious life, can for anything a dying person can do, be said in any sense to have lived holily, then his hopes are fairly built; if not they rely upon a sand, and the storm of death and the divine displeasure will

beat too violently upon them. There are no suppletories of the evangelical covenant. If we "walk according to the rule, then shall peace and righteousness kiss each other;" if we have sinned and prevaricated the rule, repentance must bring us into the ways of righteousness, and then we must go on upon the old stock; but the deeds of the flesh must be mortified, and Christ must dwell in us, and the Spirit must reign in us, and virtue must be habitual, and the habits must be confirmed; and this, as we do by the Spirit of Christ, so it is hallowed and accepted by the grace of God, and we put into a condition of favour, and redeemed from sin, and reconciled to God. But this will not be put off with single acts, nor divided parts, nor newly-commenced purposes, nor fruitless sorrow; it is a great folly to venture eternity upon dreams: so that now let me represent the condition of a dying person after a vicious life.

15. First, he that considers the frailty of human bodies, their incidences and aptness to sickness, casualties, death sudden or expected, the condition of several diseases; that some are of too quick a sense and are intolerable; some are dull, stupid, and lethargical; then add the prodigious judgments which fall upon many sinners in the act of sin, and are marks of our dangers and God's essential justice and severity; and that security which possesses such persons whose lives are vicious, and that habitual carelessness, and groundless confidence, or an absolute inconsideration, which is generally the condition and constitution of such minds, every one whereof is likely to confound a persevering sinner in miseries eternal; will soon apprehend the danger of a delayed repentance to be infinite and unmeasurable.

16. Secondly, But suppose such a person, having escaped the antecedent circumstances of the danger, is set fairly upon his death-bed with the just apprehension of his sins about him,

and his addresses to repentance; consider then the strength of his lusts, that the sins he is to mortify are inveterate, habitual, and confirmed, having had the growth and stability of a whole life; that the liberty of his will is impaired, (the scripture saying of such persons, "whose eyes are full of lust, and that cannot cease from sin; and that his servants they are whom they obey;" that they are slaves to sin, and so not *sui juris*, not at their own disposal) that his understanding is blinded, his appetite is mutinous and of a long time used to rebel and prevail; that all the inferior faculties are in disorder; that he wants the helps of grace proportionable to his necessities, (for the longer he hath continued in sin the weaker the grace of God is in him; so that, in effect, at that time the more need he hath, the less he shall receive, it being God's rule to "give to him that hath, and from him that hath not to take even what he hath:") then add the innumerable parts and great burdens of repentance, that it is not a sorrow, nor a purpose, because both these suppose *that* to be undone which is the only necessary support of all our hopes in Christ when it is done; the innumerable difficult cases of conscience that may then occur, particularly in the point of restitution, (which, among many other necessary parts of repentance, is indispensably required of all persons that are able, and in every degree in which they are able; the many temptations of the devil, the strength of passions, the impotency of the flesh, the illusions of the spirits of darkness, the tremblings of the heart, the incogitancy of the mind, the implication and entanglings of ten thousand thoughts, and the impertinences of a disturbed fancy, and the great hindrances of a sick body and a sad weary spirit. All these represent a death-bed to be but an ill station for a penitent. If the person be suddenly snatched away, he is not left so much as to dispute; if he be permitted to languish in his sickness, he is either stupid,

and apprehends nothing; or else miserable, and hath reason to apprehend too much. However, all these difficulties are to be passed and overcome before the man be put into a saveable condition. From this consideration (though perhaps it may infer more, yet) we cannot but conclude this difficulty, to be as great as the former danger, that is, vast, and ponderous, and insupportable.

17. Thirdly, suppose the clinic or death-bed penitent to be as forward in these employments, and as successful in mastering many of the objections, as reasonably can be thought; yet it is considerable, that there is a repentance which is to be repented of, and that is a repentance which is not productive of fruits of amendment of life; that there is a period set down by God in his judgment, when many, who have been profane as Esau was, are reduced into the condition of Esau, and "there is no place left for their repentance, though they seek it carefully with tears;" that they who have long refused to hear God calling them to repentance, God will refuse to hear them calling for grace and mercy; that he will laugh at some men when their calamity comes; that the five foolish virgins addressed themselves at the noise of the bridegroom's coming, and begged oil, and went out to buy oil, and yet for want of some more time and an early diligence, came too late, and were shut out for ever; that it is nowhere revealed that such late endeavours and imperfect practices shall be accepted; that God hath made but one covenant with us in Jesus Christ, which is faith and repentance consigned in baptism, and the signification of them, or the purpose of Christ is, "that we should henceforth no more serve sin," but mortify and kill him perpetually, and destroy his kingdom, and extinguish as much as in us lies his very title; that we should "live holily, justly, and soberly in this present world, in all holy conversation and godliness;" and that either we must be continued or re-

duced to this state of holy living and habitual sanctity, or we have no title to the promises; that every degree of recession from the state Christ first put us in is a recession from our hopes, and an unsettling our condition, and we add to our confidence only as our obedience is restored. All this is but a sad story to a dying person, who "sold himself to work wickedness," is an habitual iniquity and aversion from the conditions of the holy covenant in which he was sanctified.

18. And certainly it is unreasonable to plant all our hopes of heaven upon a doctrine that is destructive of all piety; which supposes us in such a condition, that God hath been offended at us all our life long, and yet that we can never return our duties to him, unless we will unravel the purposes of his predestination, or call back time again, and begin a new computation of years for us; and if he did, it would be still as uncertain. For what hope is there to that man who hath fulfilled all iniquity, and hath not fulfilled righteousness? Can a man *live* to the devil, and *die* to God? "sow to the flesh, and reap to the spirit? hope God will in mercy reward him, who hath served his enemy? Sure it is, the doctrine of the efficacy of a death-bed repentance cannot easily be reconciled with God's purposes and intentions to have us live a good life; for it would reconcile us to the hopes of heaven for a few thoughts, or words, or single actions when our life is done: it takes away the benefit of many graces, and the use of more, and the necessity of all.

19. For let it be seriously weighed, to what purpose is the variety of God's grace? What use is there of preventing, restraining, concomitant, subsequent, and persevering grace, unless it be in order to a *religious* conversation? And by deferring repentance to the last, we despoil our souls, and rob the Holy Ghost of the glory of many rays and holy influences with which the church is watered and refreshed, that it may

"grow from grace to grace," till it be consummated in glory. It takes away the very being of chastity and temperance; no such virtues, according to *this* doctrine, need to be named, among Christians. For the dying person is not in capacity to exercise these; and then either they are troublesome, without which we may do well enough; or else the condition of the unchaste and intemperate clinic is sad and deplorable. For how can he eject those devils of lust, and drunkenness, and gluttony, from whom the disease hath taken away all powers of election and variety of choice, unless it be possible to root out long-contracted habits in a moment, or acquire the habits of chastity, sobriety, and temperance, those self-denying and laborious graces, without doing a single act of the respective virtues in order to obtaining habits; unless it be so, that God will infuse habits into us more immediately than he creates our reasonable souls, in an instant, and without the co-operation of the suscipient, without "the working out our salvation with fear, and without giving all diligence, and running with patience, and resisting unto blood, and striving to the last, and "enduring unto the end" in a long fight and a long race? If God infuses such habits, why have we laws given us, and are commanded to work, and to do our duty with such a succession and lasting diligence, as if the habits were to be acquired, to which indeed God promises and ministers his aids; still leaving us the persons obliged to the law and the labour, as we are capable of the reward? I need not instance any more. But this doctrine of a death-bed repentance is inconsistent with the duties of mortification, with all the vindictive and punitive parts of repentance in exterior instances, with the precepts of waiting and watchfulness and preparation, and standing in a readiness against the coming of the bridegroom, with the patience of well doing, with exemplary living, with the imitation of the life of Christ, and con-

formities to his passion, with the kingdom and dominion and growth of grace. And lastly, it goes about to defeat one of God's great purposes; for God therefore concealed the time of our death, that we might always stand upon our guard; the Holy Jesus told us so, "watch, for ye know not what hour the Lord will come." But this makes men seem more crafty in their late-begun piety, than God was provident and mysterious in concealing the *time* of our dissolution.

20. And now if it be demanded, how long time must our repentance and holy living take up! what is the last period of commencement of our piety, after which it will be unaccepted or ineffectual? will a month, or a year, or three years, or seven suffice? for since every man falls of his first condition, and makes violent recessions from the state of his redemption and grace, how long may he lie in that state of recession with hopes of salvation? to this I answer, he cannot lie in sin a moment, without hazarding his eternity; every instant is a danger, and all the parts of its duration do increase it; and there is no answer to be given antecedently, and by way of rule; but all the hopes of our restitution depend upon the event. It is just as if we should ask, how long will it be before an infant comes to the perfect use of reason, or before a fool will become wise, or an ignorant person become excellently learned? the answer to such questions must be given according to the capacity of the man, to the industry of his person, to his opportunities or hindrances, to his life and health, and to God's blessing upon him. Only this; every day of deferring it lessens our hopes, and increases the difficulty; and when this increasing difficulty comes to the last period of impossibility, God only knows, because he measures the thoughts of man, and comprehends his powers in a span, and himself only can tell how he will correspond in those assistances without which we can never be restored. "Agree

with my adversary quickly, while thou art in the way. Quickly!" And therefore the Scripture sets down no other time than "to-day, while it is yet called to-day." But because it will every day be called "to-day," we must remember that our duty is such as requires a time, and a duration; it is a course "a race that is set before us," a duty requiring patience, and longanimity, and perseverance, and great care and diligence, "that we faint not." And, supposing we could gather probably, by circumstances, when the *last* period of our hopes begins, yet he that stands out as long as he *can*, gives proof that he came not in of good will or choice; that he loves not the present service; that his body is present, but his heart is estranged from the yoke of his present employment; and then all that he can do is odious to God, being a sacrifice without a heart, an offertory of shells and husks, while the devil and the man's lusts have devoured the kernels.

21. So that this question is not to be asked beforehand, but *after* a man hath done much of the work, and in some sense lived holily; then he may inquire into his condition, whether, if he persevere in that, he may hope for the mercies of Jesus. But he that inquires beforehand, as commonly he means *ill*, so he can be answered by none but God; because the satisfaction of such a vain question depends upon future contingencies, and accidents depending upon God's secret pleasure and predestination. He that repents but to-day, repents late enough, that he put it off from yesterday. It may be that some may begin to-day, and find mercy, and to another person it may be too late; but no man is safe or wise, that puts it off till to-morrow. And that it may appear how necessary it is to begin early, and that the work is of difficulty and continuance, and that time still increases the objections, it is certain that all the time that is lost must be redeemed by something in the sequel *equivalent*, or fit to make up the breach.

and to cure the wounds long since made, and long festering; and this must be done by doing the first works, or by something that God hath declared he will accept instead of them: the intenseness of the following actions, and the frequent repetition, must make up the defect in the extension and co-existence with a longer time. It was an act of an heroic repentance and great detestation of the crime, which Thomas Cantipratanus relates of a young gentleman condemned to die for robberies, who endeavouring to testify his repentance, and as far as was then permitted him to expiate the crime, begged of the judge that tormentors might be appointed him, that he might be long a dying, and be cut in small pieces, that the severity of the execution might be proportionable to the immensity of his sorrow and greatness of the iniquity. Such great acts do facilitate our pardon, and hasten the restitution, and in a few days comprise the elapsed duty of many months. But to rely upon such acts is the last remedy, and like unlikely physic to a despairing person. If it does well, it is well; if it happen otherwise, he must thank himself, it is but what in reason he could expect. The Romans sacrificed a dog to *Mana Geneta*, and prayed *Nè quis domi natorum bonus fiat*, that none of their domestics might be good; that is, that they might not die, (saith Plutarch) because dead people are called good. But if they be so only when they die, they will hardly find the reward of goodness in the reckonings of eternity, when to kill and to make good is all one, (as Aristotle observed it to be in the Spartan covenant with the Tegeatæ, and as it is the case of penitents never mending their lives till their lives be done;) that goodness, is fatal; and the prologue of an eternal death.

22. I conclude this point with the words of St. Paul, "God will render every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour

and immortality; eternal life. But to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath. Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil."

23. Having now discoursed of repentance upon distinct principles, I shall not need to consider those particulars which are usually reckoned parts or instances of repentance: such as contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Repentance is the fulfilling all righteousness, and includes in it whatsoever is matter of christian duty and expressly commanded; such as is contrition or godly sorrow, and confession to God; both which are declared in scripture to be in order to pardon and purgation of our sins. "A contrite and a broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise;" and, if we confess our sins, God is just and righteous to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity. To which add concerning satisfaction, that it is a judging and punishing of ourselves: that it also is an instrument of repentance, and a fruit of godly sorrow, and of great advantage for obtaining mercy of God. For indignation and revenge are reckoned by St. Paul effects of a godly sorrow, and the blessing which encourages its practice is instanced by the same saint: "when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord: but if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged:" where he expounds judged by chastened; if we were severer to ourselves, God would be gentle. And there are only these two cautions to be annexed, and then the direction is sufficient. First, That when promise of pardon is annexed to any of these or another grace, or any good action, it is not to be understood as if alone it were effectual either to the abolition or pardon of sins, but the promise is made to it as to a *member* of the whole body of piety. In the co-adunation and conjunction of parts the title is firm, but not at all in distinction and separation. For it is certain, if we

fail in one, we are guilty of all, and therefore cannot be repaired by any one grace, or one action, or one habit. And therefore "charity hides a multitude of sins" with men and God too; humility pierceth the clouds, and will not depart before its answer be gracious; and hope purifieth, and makes not ashamed; and patience, and faith, and piety to parents, and prayer, and the eight beatitudes, "have promises of this life, and of that which is to come" respectively. And yet nothing will obtain these promises but the harmony and uniting of these graces, in a holy and habitual confederation. And when we consider the promise as singularly relating to that one grace, it is to be understood comparatively; that is, such persons are happy if compared with those who have contrary dispositions. For such a capacity does its portion of the work towards complete felicity, from which the contrary quality does estrange and disentitle us. Secondly, The special and minute actions and instances of these three preparatives of repentance, are not under any command in the particulars, but are to be disposed of by Christian prudence in order to those ends to which they are most aptly instrumental and designed. Such as fasting, and corporeal severities in satisfaction, or the punitive parts of repentance; they are either vindictive of what is past, and so are proper acts or effects of contrition and godly sorrow; or else they relate to the present and future estate, and are intended for correction or emendation, and so are of good use as they are medicinal, and in that proportion not to be omitted. And so is confession to a spiritual person an excellent instrument of discipline, a bridle of intemperate passions, an opportunity of restitution; "ye which are spiritual restore such a person overtaken in a fault, (saith the apostle;) it is the application of a remedy, the consulting with a guide, and the best security to a weak or lapsed or an ignorant person; in all which cases he is unfit to judge

his own questions, and in these he is also committed to the care and conduct of another. But these special instances of repentance are capable of suppletories, and are like the corporeal works of mercy, necessary only in time and place, and in accidental obligations. He that relieves the poor, or visits the sick, choosing it for the instance of his charity, though he do not redeem captives, is charitable, and hath done his alms. And he that cures his sin by any instruments, by external, or interior and spiritual remedies, is penitent, though his diet be not ascetic and afflictive, or his lodging hard, or his sorrow bursting out into tears, or his expressions passionate and dolorous. I only add this, that acts of public repentance must be by using the instruments of the church, as she hath appointed; of private, such as by experience, or by reason, or by the counsel we can get, we shall learn to be most effective of our penitential purposes. And yet it is a great argument that the exterior expressions of corporeal severities are of good benefit, because in all ages wise men and severe penitents have chosen them for their instruments.*

THE PRAYER.

O eternal God, who wert pleased in mercy to look upon us when we were in our blood, to reconcile us when we were enemies, to forgive us in the midst of our provocations of thy infinite and eternal majesty, finding out a remedy for us which mankind could never ask, even making an atonement for us by the death of

* Whilst there is certainly much confusion amongst Taylor's ideas of repentance, the fidelity of his warnings, and his intense solicitude to secure "fruits meet for repentance," entitle him to great respect. In this point of view, even his "*Unum Necessarium*," notwithstanding all its faults, is a book which every theologian ought to study.—En.

thy Son, sanctifying us by the blood of the everlasting covenant and thy all-hallowing and divine Spirit; let thy graces so perpetually assist and encourage my endeavours, conduct my will, and fortify my intentions, that I may persevere in that holy condition which thou hast put me in by the grace of the covenant, and the mercies of the Holy Jesus. O let me never fall into those sins, and retire to that vain conversation, from which the eternal and merciful Saviour of the world hath redeemed me; but let me grow in grace, adding virtue to virtue, reducing my purposes to act, and increasing my acts till they grow into habits, and my habits till they be confirmed, and still confirming them till they be consummate in a blessed and holy perseverance. Let thy preventing grace dash all temptations in their approach; let thy concomitant grace enable me to resist them in the assault, and overcome them in the fight. That my hopes be never disappointed, nor my faith weakened, nor my confidence made remiss, nor my title and portion in the covenant be lessened. Or if thou permitest me at any time to fall, (which, Holy Jesu, avert for thy mercy and compassion sake) yet let me not sleep in sin, but recall me instantly by the clamours of a nice and tender conscience, and the quickening sermons of the Spirit, that I may never pass from sin to sin, from one degree to another; lest sin should get the dominion over me, lest thou be angry with me, and reject me from the covenant, and I perish. Purify me from all uncleanness, sanctify my spirit, that I may be holy as thou art, and let me never provoke thy jealousy, nor presume upon thy goodness, nor distrust thy mercies, nor defer my repentance, nor rely upon vain confidences; but that I may by a constant, sedulous and timely endeavour make my calling and election sure, living to thee and dying to thee, that having sowed to the Spirit, I may from thy mercies reap in the spirit bliss, and eternal

sanctity, and everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, our hope, and our mighty and ever-glorious redeemer. Amen.

*Christ's Sermon on the Mount, and of the
Eight Beatitudes.*

P R E F A C E.

By the Editor.

THE Sermon on the Mount is the favourite text-book of legal preachers. One class of them employ it to displace the great doctrines of the cross, and another appeal to it to disprove them. The orthodox moralist quotes the sermon on the mount to qualify the strong assertions of Christ and his apostles, on the subject of faith and regeneration. The heterodox moralist quotes it, to prove that salvation does not flow from the death of Christ. Thus the former neutralize, and the latter annihilate, the glorious gospel of the grace of God by the use they unwarrantably make of this sermon.

This is so much, and has been so long, the case, that some suspicion of legalism would almost inevitably attach to a book on the beatitudes: unless, indeed, the name of the author was a guarantee for its soundness: and even then, many would think that he might have been "better employed."

And if the gospel is only brought to this sermon on the mount, instead of being brought out of it: or if all that can be fairly done is to wreath and enrich it with roses of Sharon and fruits of the tree of life, gathered from other fields of scripture, it would be better to leave it as it stands, and to allow it to make its own moral impression. There is, however, no necessity for going to either extreme. The sermon is as full of direct gospel as of direct law; as fraught with free grace, as with strict morality; as rich in experimental truth, as in practical rules. It cannot, indeed, appear otherwise, except to those who do not wish to see this fine union of doctrine and duty, or to those who overlook the connection of this sermon with the preaching of Christ *before* and *after* it.

Now, the true key to the real character or spirit of the Saviour's sermons is furnished by Paul. It was, he says, the "*great salvation, which began to be spoken by the Lord.*" Whatever Christ preached, salvation was the sum and sub-

stance of it. He began and finished his ministry with this subject. The simple and sober fact, therefore, is, that the sermon on the mount grew out of the sermons which preceded it, and grows into the sermons which follow it. As all the law and the prophets hung on "the two Great Commandments," so all the doctrines and duties of this sermon hang upon the first and last sermons of Christ. Such being the fact, it is self-evident that the beatitudes, and the whole discourse, should be explained agreeably to the letter and spirit,

I. Of what Christ began his ministry with.

Now Paul says, it was the "great salvation, that began to be spoken by the Lord." Accordingly Matthew informs us, that before delivering the sermon on the mount, "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom."

II. The explanation should harmonize with the letter and spirit of what the Saviour closed his ministry with.

That was—with the explicit declaration that his blood would be shed for the remission of sin. This grand truth John had proclaimed before the sermon on the mount was preached, when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God! which taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus himself also taught it to Nicodemus explicitly—before the sermon, and often referred to it in his subsequent discourses with the disciples and the multitude. And in his last sermon, which was the sacramental one, he taught it in plain and full terms: "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for the remission of sins."

Thus he began and ended his ministry of the gospel. And hence Paul, when defining the gospel to the Corinthians says, "I declare unto you the gospel, which I before preached unto you, how that Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification."

Now with this gospel, the sermon on the mount must agree, and agreeably to it must be interpreted. It grew out of the gospel preached before it, and grows into the gospel preached after it; and is itself, therefore, gospel—in the real sense of that word, when thus connected with its real origin and object.

The word, "gospel," means, you are aware, "glad tidings." Now, the substance of these glad tidings is, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. And unless the beatitudes are founded on and connected with this grand truth, they are anything but gospel to sinners. For apart from this provision of mercy—where is the man who comes up to any one of the characters blessed by the Saviour? Where are—the poor in spirit, the penitent or the pure in heart, who could claim heaven upon the ground of being all that is meant by these terms?

Men who do not think seriously, nor judge of themselves by the spirituality of the divine requirements, may give themselves credit for being humble enough, penitent enough, and holy enough, to be included both in the blessing and the promise of Christ: but, who that really knows himself would put in a claim for eternal life, founded on what he is in himself? No one! For whoever does so proves, by doing so, that he has not scriptural knowledge of himself, nor of others. I say—nor of others either; for of all who entered heaven, we hear of no one ascribing to himself the merit of obtaining it. All whom God has acknowledged to be humble, penitent, and holy, have acknowledged themselves debtors to the Saviour for all the grace which made them so.

Let those who are at ease in Zion, think of this fact. If you can look away from the cross, and yet see yourself safe under the wings of the beatitude-promises, or see your own likeness in the beatitude-characters,—you see what none of the prophets, apostles, or martyrs ever saw in their own case. Isaiah was humble; but he could not see his title to heaven in his own humility, but in the humiliation and sacrifice of Immanuel. David was penitent, and knew that God would not despise a broken and contrite heart; but he knew also that he was indebted for such a heart to the renewing of the Holy Spirit, and had obtained it in answer to prayers founded upon their covenant engagements of the promised Saviour. Paul was holy: but he was also more afraid of trusting to his own righteousness, than the generality are of periling their souls by unrighteousness.

Is there, then, one of us, who hopes for safety and heaven from his own heart and character? I will neither upbraid nor remonstrate on account of this now. But I summon around your spirit—all "the spirits of just men made perfect." May they haunt your waking thoughts and sleeping dreams: O, not with terrors! but with the sweetest music of their golden harps, until you are sweetly persuaded to join them: in ascribing all your salvation to the blood of the Lamb. For if they be right—you must be wrong—whilst depending on your own heart of life, for salvation.

Where, now, is the gospel of the beatitudes? where it ever was, and ever will be:—in the ample provision made by the atonement of Christ for making the heart penitent and the character holy. All the beatitudes wherever they are found are the effect of believing in the Saviour for salvation, and the proof of believing with the heart.

This is the real gospel of them; and it is really "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." Indeed, in no other sense is there any gospel to us, or to any one, in the beatitudes. For until I know that I am humble, and penitent, and holy, or know how I can be made so, there is nothing in the promises before me that belongs to me. They are not, therefore,

gospel to me, but in connection with gospel which proclaims the pardon of sin and the renewal of the heart. In that connection, however,—they are glorious gospel; because they enable no judge on sure grounds, whether I have laid hold on Christ for eternal life, and applied to the Spirit for a new heart.

But, here an important question arises:—Were there any such believers in the Saviour's audience on the mount; and, if so, how were they made so?

There were "great multitudes" around him. Were any of them, at the time, actually arrived at the state of mind, which he thus blesses and encourages? There were—as we shall soon see proved.

But, if there had not been one to whom the blessing applied at the time—still the propriety and wisdom of the sermon might be triumphantly demonstrated. The Saviour was preaching for all time and all generations, to come. His sermon was to be, until the end of time, the test of true faith, and of Christian character: and therefore its future and permanent use, is of more importance than its immediate application to its first hearers.

It was, however, well adapted to do them saving good, even if there had not been one true penitent amongst them, when it began. For, by thus exhibiting and emblazoning the value of penitence, humility, and holiness, and the glory of the heaven they lead to, the Saviour took the best plan of commending these virtues, and of awakening a desire to obtain them and their rewards too.

The truth of this will be felt even by those who are yet undecided in religion. When you hear a judicious sermon, which proves clearly and rationally the solid advantages of saving faith in Christ, you see, you feel, that it is worth while to belong to Christ. You are convinced that you are serious losers by remaining undecided. You wish that you were fully in that state of mind which would warrant you to cherish the hope of all needful grace here, and of eternal life hereafter.

Now, exactly in this way, the Saviour's sermon was adapted to create the hungering and thirsting after righteousness, which he so blessed. In each case the blessing and the promise were so great and desirable, that they had a direct tendency to determine the hearers to pray for the graces thus commanded.

We ourselves feel thus, on reading the sermon: and naturally say,—“I wish I were humble enough, penitent enough, holy enough, to feel warranted enough to apply these promises to myself.”

Thus you perceive that the sermon on mount must not be judged, entirely, by its first application to them who heard it. It was intended for us as well as them; and for them not

merely at the moment of its delivery, but also when “all the fulness of the blessing of the gospel,” should be preached after the death and resurrection of the Saviour. What the multitude heard on the mountain, they were soon to have the opportunity of reconsidering under the new and marvellous lights—which were to spring up from the agony in the garden, from the sufferings of the cross, from the glories of the resurrection, and from the wonders of pentecost. These golden candlesticks were soon to shed light upon the sermon on the mount; and, therefore, it was adapted to what was to follow it, as well as to what went before it.

I am not by all this evading the question, “Were there such characters amongst the multitude, as those described and blessed by the Saviour; and, if there were, how were they brought to such a gracious state of mind?” I have shewn you that the real use and interest of the sermon do not depend on the presence or absence of such hearers. If they were there—it met their case with “strong consolation.” If they were not—it was calculated to produce them, then, since, now, and till the end of time.

There were, however, even then, not a few such.

I. This is more than probable from the revival of religion in Judea, under the rousing ministry of John the Baptist.

The Saviour's own account of that great awakening is this. “Since the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” John's own account of it is—that the people fled “from the wrath to come.”

Now it was at the very crisis of this revival that Christ began his ministry. The moment John was beheaded, the Saviour commenced his labours. He had, therefore, in his audience on the mount, both men and women whose consciences were still smarting, and whose hearts were still bleeding, under the impressions made by his forerunner. Thus the beatitudes found “a people prepared of the Lord,” to appreciate and enjoy them.

II. The Saviour's own disciples formed a part of the audience on the mount.

“His disciples,” says Matthew, “came unto him.” And they also, as well as John's disciples, were in a state of mind which required both the encouragement and the instruction contained in the sermon. Neither class knew much of the great salvation at the time, but both classes were in good earnest about their souls and eternal life.

The presence of true, though weak, believers, is evident,

III. From the names bestowed upon his disciples in the course of the sermon.

He not only distinguishes them from hypocrites and pharisees, but designates them—as the “salt of the earth,” as “lights of the world,” and even as the “children of God.”

And those names do not belong to the twelve apostles exclusively. Indeed all the twelve were not called when the sermon was preached. Nor does the word "disciple," mean an apostle—but a scholar of Christ's. It is therefore a mistake to confine the beatitudes to the case of the apostles: they belong and apply equally to all who were seriously learning of Christ the things which belonged to their eternal peace. And they still belong and apply as much to those who are thus engaged now, as to the first disciples. Whoever is "poor in spirit," is as much warranted and welcome to the benediction of the Saviour, as any one on the mount was.

"The poor in Spirit," are placed first, and first blessed. Why is this? Is it by accident, or by design? Does it imply that the poor in spirit were the weakest of the disciples, and thus first encouraged; or that they were the strongest, and thus first honoured?

The latter supposition is, I think, both the fact and the reason of the case.

There is, however, great difference of opinion amongst critics and commentators, as to the precise meaning of "poor in spirit." I need not say that it does not signify poor spirited, nor any mean or servile disposition. The mean-spirited are as little esteemed by God as by man. The gospel inculcates a noble and holy manliness of spirit. On the other hand the words do not signify humility, however they may imply it. Dr. Watts' hymn on this verse states an eternal truth—but it does not translate the words literally, nor give the true sense exactly.

"Blest are the humble souls who see
Their emptiness and poverty."

Nothing is more true or important than this sentiment: and most certainly no one is poor in spirit who is insensible of or unaffected by, the utter poverty of man to redeem or renew himself. We cannot pay one debt to the law, nor buy one blessing of the gospel. Whoever, therefore, feels this utter emptiness, so as to depend entirely on the fulness of Christ for redeeming and renewing grace, comes as fairly under the benediction and the promise of Christ—as those whom he called "the poor in spirit." I will go farther: he will account no one poor in spirit who does not feel and own himself an entire debtor to grace.

This, however, is not the precise sentiment taught in this verse. It is the point—the grand and final point, which the text was intended to lead to—and pave the way for, whenever the doctrine of man's emptiness, and the Saviour's fulness was fully revealed and explained by the atonement.

That doctrine, however, as you are well aware, was not fully cleared up until after the death and resurrection of Christ.

Even the apostles did not understand it clearly until the day of Pentecost. We must not, therefore, ascribe to the disciples on the mount—more knowledge than they had. Whenever this is done—it darkens the lustre of the Saviour's condescension and tenderness; for he blessed and encouraged much weaker faith than some think fit to acknowledge. Indeed, it would have gone hard with the strongest of his first disciples, if he had insisted upon as accurate, and enlarged, and harmonious views as some insist on. In fact—there would have been no benedictions on the mount, if the Saviour had required at once the full assurance of faith or understanding. All the bruised reeds on the mount would have been broken, and all the smoking flax quenched, if Christ had made out saving faith to be what some call for.

This is my reason for distinguishing between paraphrases of the text, founded on and drawn from all fulness of the gospel, and that sense which it bore and conveyed when the gospel was not fully explained.

It was, therefore, an *unworldly* spirit which the Saviour blessed. I mean by this, however, a spirit unworldly for his sake, and for the sake of heaven. And the disciples who had this spirit at that time, were, of all who believed on him, the strongest in faith; and, therefore, they were placed first, and first blessed.

Weigh this matter. How did the rich in spirit, or the worldly-spirited treat the Saviour. They despised him. Wealth, ease, honour, ambition, saw nothing pleasing in his person or ministry. All such spirits rejected him as the Messiah promised to the fathers. But the poor in spirit—the unworldly-minded who would not risk their souls to gain the whole world, they forsook all, or counted all things but dross, in comparison with the great salvation which he preached and promised.

This was real and strong faith!—in Christ. This was the noblest homage paid to his claims at that time. The world, as a portion, as a pursuit, as an honour, was renounced for his sake! And he knew how to appreciate this sacrifice. The principle of it is the very spirit of faith, which is—the preference of the Saviour and heaven to every thing.

There was faith—in mourning for sin at his feet: faith—in sitting meekly to learn of him: faith—in hungering and thirsting after righteousness: but more and stronger faith in counting all things but loss to win Christ. This was seeking him "all and all" in salvation.

Reader, the world, in some way, was then—the great temptation to the neglect and rejection of the Saviour. It is so still. It is for the sake of something worldly—that every one who has not fled to Christ, keeps away from Christ. You, perhaps, prefer, at present, to his favour, some earthly good. Your heart and hands may be full of some temporal object.

which leaves neither room nor relish for his service or salvation. That object whatever it be—if more prized than Christ or heaven, will exclude from both.—Ed.

1. The holy Jesus, being entered upon his prophetic office, in the first solemn sermon gave testimony that he was not only an Interpreter of laws then in being, but also a law-giver, and the angel of the new and everlasting covenant; which, because God meant to establish it with mankind by the mediation of his Son, by his Son also he now began to publish the conditions of it; and that the publication of the Christian law might retain some proportion, at least, and analogy of circumstance with the promulgation of the law of Moses, Christ went up into a mountain, and from thence gave the oracle. And here he taught all the disciples; for what he was now to speak was to become a law, a part of the condition on which he established the covenant, and founded our hopes of heaven. Our excellent and gracious law-giver, knowing that the great argument in all practical disciplines is the proposal of the *end*, which is their crown and their reward, begins his sermon, as David began his most divine collection of hymns, with blessedness. And having enumerated eight duties, which are the rule of the spirits of Christians, he begins every duty with a beatitude, and concludes it with a reward; to manifest the reasonableness, and to invite and determine our choice to such graces, as are circumscribed with felicities; which have blessedness in present possession and glory in the consequence; which in the midst of the most passive and afflictive of them tells us that we are blessed; which is indeed a felicity, as a hope is good, or as a rich heir is rich, who, in the midst of his discipline and the severity of tutors and governors, knows he is designed to and certain of a great inheritance.

2. The eight beatitudes, which are the duty

of a Christian, and the rule of our spirit, and the special discipline of Christ, seem like so many paradoxes and impossibilities reduced to reason; and are indeed virtues made excellent by rewards, by the sublimity of grace, and the mercies of God; hallowing and crowning those habits which are despised by the world, and esteemed the conditions of lower and less considerable people. But God “sees not as man sees,” and his rules of estimate and judgment are not borrowed from the exterior splendour, which is apt to seduce children, and couzen fools, and please the appetites of sense and abused fancy; but they are such as he makes himself; excellences which by abstractions and separations from things below land us upon celestial appetites. And they are states of suffering rather than states of life: for the great employment of a Christian being to bear the cross, Christ laid the pedestal so low, that the rewards were like rich mines, interred in deeps and inaccessible retirements, and did choose to build our felicities upon the torrents and violences of affliction and sorrow. Without these graces we cannot get heaven; and without sorrow and sad accidents we cannot exercise these graces. Such are,

3. First, “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Poverty of spirit is in respect of secular affluence and abundance, or in respect of great opinion and high thoughts; either of which have divers acts and offices. That the first is one of the meanings of this text is certain, because St. Luke, repeating this beatitude, delivers it plainly, “Blessed are the poor;” and to it he opposes riches. And our blessed Saviour speaks so suspiciously of riches and rich men, that he represents the condition to be full of danger, and temptation: and St. James calls it full of sin, describing rich men to be oppressors, litigious, proud, spiteful, and contentious; which sayings, like all others of that nature, are to be under-

stood in common and most frequent accidents, not regularly, but very improbable to be otherwise. For if we consider our vocation, St. Paul informs us, that "not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith." And how "hard it is for a rich man to enter into heaven," our great master hath taught us, by saying, "it is more easy for a camel to pass through a needle's eye." And the reason is, because of the infinite temptation which riches minister to our spirits; it being such an opportunity of vices, that nothing remains to countermand the act but a strong, resolute, unaltered and habitual purpose, and pure love of virtue; riches in the mean time offering to us occasions of lust, fuel for revenge, instruments of pride, entertainment of our desires, engaging them in low, worldly and sottish appetites, inviting us to shew our power in oppression, our greatness in vanities, our wealth in prodigal expenses, and to answer the importunity of our lusts, not by a denial, but by a correspondence and satisfaction, till they become our mistresses, imperious, arrogant, tyrannical, and vain. But poverty is the sister of a good mind, it ministers aid to wisdom, industry to our spirit, severity to our thoughts, soberness to counsels, modesty to our desires. It restrains extravagancy and dissolution of appetites; the next thing above our present condition, which is commonly the *object* of our wishes, being temperate and little, proportionable enough to nature, not wandering beyond the limits of necessity or a moderate conveniency, or at farthest but to a free refreshment and recreation. And the cares of poverty are single and mean, rather a fit employment to correct our levities, than a business to impede our better thoughts; since a little thing supplies the needs of nature, and the earth and the fountain with little trouble minister food to us, and God's common providence and daily dispensation ease our cares, and make them port-

able. But the cares and businesses of rich men are violences to our whole man; they are loads to memory, business for the understanding, work for two or three arts and sciences, employment for many servants to assist in, increase the appetite and heighten the thirst; and by making their dropsy bigger, and their capacities large, they destroy all those opportunities and possibilities of charity in which only riches can be useful.

4. But it is not a mere poverty of *possession* which entitles us to the blessing, but a poverty of *spirit*; that is, a contentedness in every state, an aptness to renounce all when we are obliged in a duty, a refusing to continue a possession when we, for it, must quit a virtue or a noble action; a divorce of our affections from those gilded vanities, a generous contempt of the world; and at no hand heaping riches, either with injustice or with avarice, either with wrong or impotency, of action or affection. Not like Laberius described by the poet, who thought nothing so criminal as poverty, and every spending of a *penny* was the loss of a moral virtue, and every gaining of a *talent* was an action glorious and heroical. But poverty of spirit accounts riches to be the servants of God first, and then of ourselves; being sent by God, and to return when he pleases, and all the while they are with us, to do his business. It is a looking upon riches and things of the earth, as they do who look upon it from heaven, to whom it appears little and unprofitable. And because the residence of this blessed poverty is in the *mind*, it follows that it be here understood, that all that exinanition and renunciation, abjection and humility of mind, which depauperates the spirit, making it less worldly and more spiritual, is the duty here enjoined. For if a man throws away his gold, as did Crates, the Theban, or the proud philosopher Diogenes, and yet leaves a spirit high, airy, phantastical and vain, pleasing himself, and with complacently reflecting upon

his own act, his poverty is but a circumstance of pride; and the opportunity of an imaginary and a secular greatness. Ananias and Sapphira renounced the world by selling their possessions; but because they were not "poor in spirit," but still retained the affections to the world, therefore they "kept back part of the price," and lost their hopes. The church of Laodicea was possessed with a spirit of pride, and flattered themselves in imaginary riches; they were not poor in spirit, but they were poor in possession and condition. These wanted humility, the other wanted a generous contempt of worldly things; and both were destitute of this grace.

5. The acts of this grace are; First, To cast off all inordinate affection to the riches. Secondly, In heart and spirit, that is, preparation of mind, to quit the possession of all riches, and actually so to do when God requires it, that is, when the retaining riches loses a virtue. Thirdly, To be well pleased with the whole economy of God, his providence and dispensation of all things; being contented in all estates. Fourthly, To employ that wealth God hath given to us in actions of justice and religion. Fifthly, To be thankful to God in all temporal losses. Sixthly, Not to distrust God, or to be solicitous and fearful of want in the future. Seventhly, To put off the spirit of vanity, pride, and phantastic complacency in ourselves; thinking lowly or meanly of whatsoever we are to do. Eighthly, To prefer others before ourselves, doing honour and deference to them, and either contentedly receiving affronts done to us, or modestly undervaluing ourselves. Ninthly, Not to praise ourselves, but when God's glory and the edification of our neighbour are concerned in it, nor willingly to hear others praise us. Tenthly, To despoil ourselves of all interior propriety, denying our own will in all instances of subordination to our superiors, and our own judgment in matters of difficulty and

question, submitting ourselves and our affairs to the advice of wiser men, and the decision of those who are trusted with the cure of our souls. Eleventhly, Emptying ourselves of ourselves, and throwing ourselves wholly upon God, relying upon his providence, trusting his promises, craving his grace, and depending upon his strength for all our actions, and deliverances, and duties.

6. The reward promised is, "the kingdom of heaven. Fear not little flock, it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom. To be little in our own eyes is to be great in God's; this poverty of the spirit shall be rewarded with the riches of the kingdoms, of both kingdoms; that of heaven is expressed. Poverty is the highway of eternity. But therefore the kingdom of grace is taken in the way, the way to our country; and it being the forerunner of glory, and nothing else but an antedated eternity, is part of the reward as well as of our duty. And therefore whatsoever is signified by kingdom, in the appropriate evangelical sense, is there intended as a recompense. For the kingdom of the gospel is a congregation and society of Christ's poor, of his little ones: they are the communion of saints, and their present entertainment is knowledge of truth, remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and what else in scripture is signified to be a part or grace or condition of the kingdom. For "to the poor the gospel is preached." That is, to the poor the kingdom is promised and ministered.

7. Secondly, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." This duty of christian mourning is commanded not for itself, but in order to many good ends. It is in order to patience: tribulations worketh patience; and therefore we glory in them, (saith St. Paul;) and St. James, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye enter into divers temptations, knowing that the trial of your faith (viz. by afflictions)

worketh patience." Secondly, It is in order to repentance. Godly sorrow worketh repentance. By consequence it is in order to pardon; for a contrite heart God will not reject. And, after all this, it leads to joy. And therefore St. James preached a homily of sorrow; be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, that is, in penitential mourning; for he adds, humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. The acts of this duty are, First, To bewail our sins. Secondly, To lament our infirmities, as they are principles of sin, and recessions from our first state. Thirdly, To weep for our own evils and sad accidents, as they are issues of the divine anger. Fourthly, To be sad for the miseries and calamities of the church, or of any member of it, and indeed to weep with every one that weeps; that is, not to rejoice in his evil, but to be compassionate, and pitiful, and apt to bear another's burthen. Fifthly, To avoid all loose and immoderate laughter, all dissolution of spirit and manners, uncomely jestings, free revellings, carnivals and balls, which are the perdition of precious hours, (allowed us for repentance and possibilities of heaven) which are the instruments of infinite vanity, idle talking, impertinency and lust, and very much below the severity and retiredness of a Christian spirit. Of this Christ became to us the great example; for St. Basil reports a tradition of him, that he never laughed, but wept often. And if we mourn with him, we also shall rejoice in the joys of eternity.

8. Thirdly, "Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the earth." That is, the gentle and softer spirits, persons not turbulent or unquiet, not clamorous or impatient, not over bold or impudent, not quarrelous or discontented, not brawlers or contentious, not nice or curious, but men who submit to God, and know no choice of fortune or employment or success but what God chooses for them; having peace at home, because nothing from without does dis-

compose their spirit. In some, meekness is an indifferency to any exterior accident, a being reconciled to all conditions and instances of providence, a reducing ourselves to such an evenness and interior satisfaction, that there is the same conformity of spirit and fortune by complying with my fortune, as if my fortune did comply with my spirit. And, therefore, in the order of beatitudes, meekness is set between mourning and desire, that it might balance and attempter those actions by indifferency, which, by reason of their abode are apt to the transportation of passion. The reward expressed is a possession of the earth; that is, a possession of all which is excellent here below, to consign him to a future glory, as Canaan was a type of heaven. For meekness is the best cement and combining of friendships; it is a great endearment of us to our company. It is an ornament to have a meek and quiet spirit, a prevention of quarrels, and pacifier of wrath; it purchaseth peace, and is itself a quietness of spirit. It is the greatest affront to all injuries in the world; for it returns them upon the injurious, and makes them useless, ineffective, and harmless. And is an antidote against all the evil consequence of anger and adversity, and tramples upon the usurping passions of the irascible faculty.

9. But the greatest part of this passage and landscape is *sky*: and as a man in all countrys can see more of heaven than of the earth he dwells on, so also he may in this promise. For although the Christian hears the promise of the inheritance of the earth, yet he must place his eye and fix his heart upon heaven; which, by looking downward also upon this promise, as in a vessel of limpid water, he may see reflection, without looking upwards by a direct intuition. It is heaven that is designed by this promise as well as by any of the rest; though this grace takes in also the refreshments of the earth, by equivalence and a suppletory design. But

here we have no abiding city, and therefore no inheritance; this is not our country, and therefore here cannot be our portion: unless we chose, as did the prodigal, to go into a strange country, and spend our portion with riotous and beastly living, and forfeit our Father's blessing. The Devil carrying our Blessed Saviour to a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world; but, besides that they were offered upon ill conditions, they were not eligible by him upon any. And neither are they to be chosen by us for our inheritance and portion evangelical: for the gospel is founded upon better promises, and therefore the hopes of a Christian ought not to terminate upon any thing less than heaven. Indeed our Blessed Saviour chose to describe this beatitude in the words of the Psalmist; thus inviting his disciples to an excellent precept by the insinuation of those Scriptures which themselves admitted. But as the earth which was promised to the meek man in David's Psalm, was no other earth but the *terra promissionis*, the land of Canaan; if we remember that this land of promise was but a transition and an allegory to a greater and more noble, that it was but a type of heaven, we shall not see cause to wonder why the Holy Jesus intending heaven for the reward of this grace also, together with the rest, did call it "the inheritance of the earth." For now is revealed to us "a new heaven and a new earth, an habitation made without hands, eternal in the heavens." And he understands nothing of the excellency of Christian religion, whose affections dwell below, and are satisfied with a portion of dirt and corruption. "If we be risen with Christ, let us seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." But if a Christian desires to take possession of this earth in his way, as his inheritance or portion, he hath reason to fear it will be his all. We have but one inheritance,

one country, and here we are "strangers and pilgrims." Abraham told Dives that he had "enjoyed his good things here;" he had "the inheritance of the earth," in the gross material sense; and therefore he had no other portion but what the devils have. And when we remember that persecution is the lot of the church, and that poverty is her portion, and her quantum is but food and raiment at the best, and that patience is her support, and hope her refreshment, and self-denial her security, and meekness is all her possession and title to a subsistence; it will appear certain, that as "Christ's kingdom was not of this world," so neither shall his saints have their portion in *that* which is not his kingdom. They are miserable if they do not reign with him; and he never reigned here; but "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him" hereafter. True it is, Christ promised to him that should lose any interest for his sake, the restitution of a hundred fold in this world. But as the sense of that cannot be literal, for he cannot receive a hundred mothers or a hundred wives, so what soever that be, it is to be enjoyed with persecution. And then such a portion of the earth as Christ hath expressed in figure, and shall by way of recompense restore us, and such a recompense as we can enjoy with persecution, and such an enjoyment as is consistent with our having lost all our temporals, and such an acquit and purchase of it as is not destructive of the grace of meekness; all that, we may enter into our accounts as part of our lot, and an emanation from the holy promise. But in the foot of this account we shall not find any great affluence of temporal accruments. However it be, although, when a meek man hath earthly possessions, by this grace he is taught how to use them, and how to part with them; yet if he hath them not, by the virtue here commanded, he is not suffered to use any thing violent towards the acquiring them, not so much

as a violent passion or a stormy imagination ; for then he loses his meekness, and whatever he gets, can be none of the reward of this grace. He that fights for temporals (unless by some other appendent duty he be obliged) loses his title by striving incompetently for the reward ; he cuts off that hand by which alone he can receive it. For unless he be indeed meek, he hath no right to what he calls "the inheritance of the earth;" and he that is not content to want the inheritance of the earth when God requires him, is not meek. So that, if this beatitude be understood in a temporal sense, it is an offer of a reward upon a condition we shall be *without* it, and be content too : for, in every sense of the word, meekness implies a just satisfaction of the spirit, and acquiescence in every estate or contingency whatsoever, though we have no possessions but of a good conscience, no bread but that of carefulness, no support but from the Holy Spirit, and a providence ministering to our natural necessities by an extemporary provision. And certain it is, the meekest of Christ's servants, the apostles and the primitive Christians, had no other verification of this promise but this, that "rejoicing in tribulation, and knowing how to want as well as how to abound, through many tribulations they entered into the kingdom of heaven:" for that is the country in which they are co-heirs with Jesus. But if we will certainly understand what this reward is, we may best know it by understanding the duty ; and this we may best learn from him that gave it in commandment. "Learn of me, for I am meek," (said the Holy Jesus) and to him was promised that "the uttermost ends of the earth should be his inheritance:" and yet he died first, and went to heaven before it was verified to him in any sense, but only of content, and desire, and joy in suffering, and in all variety of accident. And thus also if we be meek, we may receive the inheritance of the earth.

10. The acts of this grace are, *First*, To submit to all the instances of divine providence, not repining at any accident which God hath chosen for us, and given us as part of our lot, or a punishment of our deserving, or an instrument of virtue ; not envying the gifts, graces, or prosperities of our neighbours. *Secondly*, To pursue the interest and employment of our calling, in which we are placed ; not despising the meanness of any work, though never so disproportionate to our abilities. *Thirdly*, To correct all malice, wrath, evil-speaking, and inordinations of anger, whether in respect of the object or the degree. *Fourthly*, At no hand to entertain any thoughts of revenge or retaliation of evil. *Fifthly*, To be affable and courteous in our deportment towards all persons of our society and intercourse. *Sixthly*, Not to censure or reproach the weakness of our neighbour, but to support his burden, cover and cure his infirmities. *Seventhly*, To excuse what may be excused, lessening severity, and being gentle in reprehension. *Eighthly*, To be patient in afflictions, and thankful under the cross. *Ninthly*, To endure reproof with shame at ourselves for deserving it, and thankfulness to the charitable physician that offers the remedy. *Tenthly*, To be modest and fairly-mannered toward our superiors, obeying, reverencing, speaking honourably of and doing honour to aged persons, and all whom God hath set over us, according to their several capacities. *Eleventhly*, To be ashamed and very apprehensive of the unworthiness of a crime ; at no hand losing our fear of the invisible God, and our reverence to visible societies, or single persons. *Twelfthly*, To be humble in our exterior addresses and behaviour in churches and all holy places. *Thirteenthly*, To be temperate in government, not imperious, unreasonable, insolent or oppressive ; lest we provoke to wrath, those whose interest, of person and of religion we are to defend or

promote. Fourteenth, To do our endeavour to expiate any injury we did, by confessing the fact, and offering satisfaction, and asking forgiveness.

11. Fourthly, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." This grace is the greatest indication of spiritual health, when our appetite is right, strong, and regular; when we are desirous of spiritual nourishment, when we long for manna, and "follow Christ for loaves," not of a low and terrestrial gust, but of that "bread which came down from heaven." Now there are *two* sorts of holy repast which are the proper objects of our desires. The bread of heaven, which is proportioned to our hunger; that is, all those immediate emanations from Christ's pardon of our sins, redemption from our former conversation, and holy laws and commandments. To this food there is also a spiritual beverage to quench our thirst: and this is the effect of the Holy Spirit, who first "moved upon the waters" of baptism, and afterwards became to us "the breath of life," giving us holy inspirations and assistances, refreshing our wearinesses, cooling our fevers, and allaying all our intemperate passions, making us holy, humble, resigned and pure; "according to the pattern in the mount," even "as our Father is pure." So that the first redemption and pardon of us by Christ's merits is the *bread* of life, for which we must hunger; and the refreshments and daily emanations of the Spirit, who is the spring of comforts and purity, is that *drink* which we must thirst after. A being first reconciled to God by Jesus, and a being sanctified and preserved in purity by the Holy Spirit, is the adequate object of our desires. Some to hunger and thirst, fancy the analogy and proportion of the two sacraments, the waters of baptism, and the food of the eucharist; some, the bread of the paten, and the wine of the chalice. But it is certain they signify one desire, expressed by the most im-

patient and necessary of our appetites, hungering and thirsting. And the object is, whatsoever may be the principle or the effect, the beginning or the way, or the end of righteousness; that is, the mercies of God, the pardon of Jesus, the graces of the Spirit, a holy life, and a holy death, and a blessed eternity.

12. The blessing and reward of this grace is fulness or satisfaction; which relates immediately to heaven, because nothing here below can satisfy us. The grace of God is our viaticum, and entertains us by the way; its nature is to increase, not to satisfy the appetites: not because the grace is empty and unprofitable, as are the things of the world, but because it is excellent, although in order to a greater perfection; it invites the appetite by its present goodness, but it leaves it unsatisfied, because it is not yet arrived at glory: and yet the present imperfection, in respect of all the good of this world's possession, is rest and satisfaction, and is imperfect only in respect of its own future compliment and perfection; and our hunger continues, and our needs return, because all we have is but an antepast. But the glories of eternity are also the proper object of our desires: that is, the reward of God's grace, which is "the crown of righteousness. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; and when I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it." The acts of this virtue are multiplied according to its object; for they are only, First, To desire, and Secondly, Pray for, and Thirdly, Labour for all that which is righteousness in any sense: First, For the pardon of our sins; Secondly, For the graces and sanctification of the Spirit; Thirdly, for the advancement of Christ's kingdom; Fourthly, for the reception of the holy sacrament, and all the instruments, ordinances and ministries of grace; Fifthly, For the grace of perseverance; Sixthly, and finally for the crown of righteousness.

13. Fifthly, "Blessed are the merciful; for

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they shall obtain mercy." Mercy is the greatest mark and token of holy, elect, and predestinate persons in the world. "Put ye on (my beloved) as the elect of God, the bowels of mercy, holy and precious." For mercy is an attribute, in the manifestation of which, as all our happiness consists, so God takes greatest complacency, and delights in it above all his other works. He "punishes to the third and fourth generation," but "shows mercy unto thousands." Therefore the Jews say, that Michael flies with *one* wing, and Gabriel with *two*; meaning, that the pacifying angel, the minister of mercy, flies swift, but the exterminating angel, the messenger of wrath, is slow. And we are called to our approximation to God, by the practice of this grace: we are made "partakers of the divine nature by being merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful." This mercy consists in the affections, and in their effects and actions. In both which the excellency of this Christian precept is eminent above the goodness of the moral precept of the old philosophers, and the piety and charity of the Jews by virtue of the Mosaic law. The Stoic philosophers affirm it to be the duty of a wise man, to succour and help the necessities of indigent and miserable persons; but at no hand to pity them, or suffer any trouble or compassion in our affections: for they intended that a wise person should be dispassionate, unmoved, and without disturbance in every accident and object and concernment. But the Blessed Jesus, who came to reconcile us to his Father, and purchase us an entire possession, did intend to redeem us from sin, and make our passions obedient and apt to be commanded, even and moderate in temporal affairs, but high and active in some instances of spiritual concernment; and in all instances, that the affection go along with the grace; that we must be as merciful in our compassion, as compassionate in our exterior expressions and actions. The Jews by the prescript of their

law were to be merciful to all their nation and confederates in religion; and this their mercy was called justice: "He hath dispersed abroad and given to the poor, his righteousness (or justice) remaineth for ever." But the mercies of a Christian are to extend to all: "Do good to all men, especially to the household of faith." And this diffusion of a mercy, not only to brethren, but to aliens and enemies, is that which St. Paul calls goodness; still retaining the old appellation for Judaical mercy, righteousness: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some will even dare to die." So that the Christian mercy must be a mercy of the whole man, the heart must be merciful, and the hand operating in the labour of love; and it must be extended to all persons of all capacities, according as their necessity requires, and our ability permits, and our endearments and other obligations dispose of, and determine the order.

14. The acts of this grace are, First, To pity the miseries of all persons, in all calamities spiritual or temporal, having a fellow-feeling in their afflictions. Secondly, To be afflicted and sad in the public judgments imminent or incumbent upon a church, or state, or family. Thirdly, To pray to God for all afflicted persons. Fourthly, To do all acts of bodily assistance to all miserable and distressed people, to relieve the poor, to redeem captives, to forgive debts to disabled persons, to pay debts for them, to lend them money, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, to rescue persons from dangers, to defend and relieve the oppressed, to comfort widows and fatherless children, to help them to right that suffer wrong; and, in brief, to do anything for their relief, support, succour, and comfort. Fifthly, to do all acts of spiritual mercy, to counsel the doubtful, to admonish the erring, to strengthen the weak, to resolve the scrupulous, to teach the ignorant, and any thing else which may be instrumental to his conversion, per-

severance, restitution and salvation, or may rescue him from spiritual dangers, or supply him in any ghostly necessity. The reward of this virtue is symbolical to the virtue itself; the grace and glory differing in nothing but degrees, and every virtue being a reward to itself. The merciful shall receive mercy; mercy to help them in time of need; mercy from God, who will not only give them the great mercies of pardon and eternity, but also dispose the hearts of others, to pity and supply their needs, as they have done to others. For the present, there is nothing more noble than to be beneficial to others, and to lift up the poor out of the mire, and rescue them from misery; it is to do the work of God: and for the future, nothing is a greater title to a mercy at the day of judgment than to have shewed mercy to our necessitous brother; it being expressed to be the only rule and instance by which Christ means to judge the world, by their mercy and charity, or their unmercifulness respectively; "I was hungry, and ye fed me," or ye fed me not: and so we stand or fall in the great and eternal scrutiny. And it was the prayer of St. Paul, (Onesiphorus shewed kindness to the great apostle). "The Lord shew him a mercy in that day. For a cup of charity, though but full of cold water, shall not lose its reward."

15. Sixthly, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they see God." This purity of heart includes purity of hands. "Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle? even he that is of clean hands and a pure heart; that is, he that hath not given his mind unto vanity, nor sworn to deceive his neighbour." It signifies justice of action and candour of spirit, innocence of manners and sincerity of purpose; it is one of those great circumstances that consummates charity: "For the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and faith unfeigned;" that is, a heart free from all carnal affections, not only in the matter of

natural impurity, but also spiritual and immaterial; such as heresies, which are impurities, because they mingle secular interest or prejudice with persuasions in religion; seditions, hurtful and impious stratagems, and all those which St. Paul enumerates to be "works or fruits of the flesh." "A good conscience;" that is, a conscience either innocent or penitent, a state of grace, either a not having prevaricated, or a being restored to our baptismal purity. "Faith unfeigned;" that also is the purity of sincerity, and excludes hypocrisy, timorous and half persuasions, neutrality and indifferency in matters of salvation. And all these do integrate the whole duty of charity. But purity, as it is a special grace, signifies only honesty and uprightness of soul, without hypocrisy to God and dissimulation towards men; and then a freedom from all carnal desires, so as not to be governed or led by them. Chastity is the purity of the body; simplicity is the purity of the spirit; both are the sanctification of the whole man, for the entertainment of the Spirit of purity and of truth.

16. The acts of this virtue are, First, To quit all lustful thoughts, not to take delight in them, not to retain them or invite them, but, as objects of displeasure, to avert them from us. Secondly, To resist all lustful desires, and extinguish them by their proper correctories and remedies. Thirdly, To refuse all occasions, opportunities, and temptations to impurity; denying to please a wanton eye, or to use a lascivious gesture, or to go into a danger, or to converse with an improper or unsafe object; "hating the garment spotted with the flesh," so St. Jude calls it; and "not to look upon a maid," so Job: "not to sit with a woman that is a singer," so the son of Sirach. Fourthly, To be of a liberal soul, not mingling with affections of money and inclinations of covetousness, not doing any act of violence rapine or injustice. Fifthly, To be ingenuous in our thoughts, purposes, and professions;

speaking nothing contrary to our intentions, but being really what we seem. Sixthly, To give all our faculties and affections to God, without dividing interests between God and his enemies, without entertaining of any one crime in society, with our pretences for God. Seventhly, Not to lie in sin, but instantly to repent of it and return "purifying our conscience from dead works." Eighthly, Not to dissemble our faith or belief when we are required to its confession; nor pretending a persuasion complying with those from whom secretly we differ. Lust, covetousness, and hypocrisy, are the *three* great enemies of this grace, they are the motes of our eyes, and the spots of our souls. The reward of purity is the vision beatifical. If we are "pure as God is pure, we shall also see him as he is: when we awake up after his likeness, we shall behold his presence." To which, in this world, we are consigned by freedom from the cares of covetousness, the shame of lust, the fear of discovery, and the stings of an evil conscience, which are the portion of the several impurities here forbidden.

17. Seventhly, "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God. The wisdom of God is first pure, and then peaceable;" that is the order of the beatitudes. As soon as Jesus was born, the angels sang a hymn, "glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men;" signifying the two great errands upon which Christ was dispatched in his legation from heaven to earth. He is "the prince of peace. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man ever shall see God." The acts of this grace are, First, to mortify our anger, peevishness, and fiery dispositions; which are so apt to enkindle upon every slight accident, inadvertency, or misfortune of a friend or servant. Secondly, Not to be hasty, rash, provocative, or upbraiding in our language. Thirdly, To live quietly and serenely in our families and

neighbourhoods. Fourthly, Not to backbite, slander, misreport, or undervalue any man; carrying tales, or sowing dissention between brethren. Fifthly, Not to interest ourselves in the quarrels of others by abetting either part, except where charity calls us to rescue the oppressed; and then also to do a work of charity without mixtures of uncharitableness. Sixthly, To avoid all suits of law as much as is possible, without intrenching upon any other collateral obligation towards a third interest, or a necessary support for ourselves, or great conveniency for our families; or, if we be engaged in law, to pursue our just interests with just means and charitable maintenance. Seventhly, To endeavour by all means to reconcile disagreeing persons. Eighthly, to endeavour by affability and fair deportment to win the love of our neighbours. Ninthly, To offer satisfaction to all whom we have wronged or slandered, and to remit the offences of others, and in trials of right to find out the most charitable expedient to determine it, as by indifferent arbitration, or something like it. Tenthly, To be open, free, and ingenuous in representations and fair expostulations with persons whom we conceive to have wronged us, that no seed of malice or rancour may be latent in us, and upon the breath of a new displeasure break out into a flame. Eleventh, To be modest in our arguings, disputings, and demands, not laying great interest upon trifles. Twelfth, To moderate, balance, and temper our zeal by the rules of prudence and the alloy of charity that we quarrel not for opinions, nor entitle God to our impotent and mistaken fancies, nor lose charity for a pretence of an article of faith. Thirteenth, To pray heartily for our enemies, real or imaginary, always loving and being apt to benefit their persons, and to cure their faults by charitable remedies. Fourteenth, To abstain from doing all affronts, disgraces, slights, and uncomely jarrings, and mockings of our neigh-

not giving him appellatives of scorn or derision. Fifteenth, To submit to all our superiors in all things, either doing what they command, or suffering what they impose; at no hand lifting our heel against those upon whom the characters of God and the marks of Jesus are imprinted in eminent and signal authority; such as are principally the king, and then the bishops, whom God hath set to "watch over our souls." Sixteenth, Not to invade the possessions of our neighbours, or commence war, but when we are bound by justice and legal trust to defend the rights of others, or our own in order to do our duty. Seventeenth, Not to "speak evil of dignities," or undervalue their persons, or publish their faults, or upbraid the levities of our governors; knowing that they also are designed by God, to be converted to us for castigation and amendment of us. Eighteenth, Not to be busy in other mens affairs. And then "the peace of God will rest upon us." The reward is no less than the adoption and inheritance of sons; for "he hath given unto us power to be called the sons of God;" for he is the father of peace, and the sons of peace are the sons of God, and therefore have a title to the inheritance of sons, to be heirs with God, and co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom of peace, and essential and never-failing charity.

18. Eighthly; "blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This being the hardest command in the whole discipline of Jesus is fortified with a double blessedness; for it follows immediately, "blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you:" meaning, that all persecution for the cause of righteousness, though the affliction be instanced only in reproachful language, shall be a title to the blessedness. Any suffering for any good or harmless action is a degree of martyrdom. It is the greatest testimony in the world of the great love to quit that for God which hath

possessed our most natural, regular, and orderly affections. It is a preferring God's cause before our own interest; it is a loving of virtue without secular ends; it is the noblest, the most resigned, ingenuous, valiant act in the world, to die for God, whom we never have seen; it is the crown of faith, the confidence of hope, and our greatest charity. The primitive churches living under persecution commenced many pretty opinions concerning the state and special dignity of martyrs, apportioning to them one of the three coronets which themselves did knit, and supposed as pendants to the great crown of righteousness. They made it suppletory of baptism, expiatory of sin, satisfactory of public penances; they placed them in bliss immediately, declared them to need no after-prayer, such as the devotion of those times used to pour upon the graves of the faithful: with great prudence they did endeavour to alleviate this burden, and sweeten the bitter chalice; and they did it by such doctrines which did only remonstrate this great truth, that since "no love was greater than to lay down our lives," nothing could be so great, but God would indulge to them. And indeed whatsoever they said in this had no inconvenience, nor would it now, unless men should think mere suffering to be sufficient to excuse a wicked life, or that they be invited to dishonour an excellent patience with the mixture of an impure action. There are many who would die for Christ if they were put to it, and yet will not quit a lust for him: those are hardly to be esteemed Christ's martyrs; unless they be "dead unto sin," their dying for an article or a good action will not pass the great scrutiny. And it may be boldness of spirit, or sullenness, or an honourable gallantry of mind, or something that is excellent in civil and political estimate, moves the person, and endears the suffering; but that "love" only "which keeps the commandments" will teach us to die for love, and from love to pass to blessedness through

the red sea of blood. And indeed it is more easy to die *for* chastity than to live *with* it: and many women have been found, who suffered death under the violence of tyrants for defence of their holy vows and purity, who, had they long continued among pleasures, courtships, curiosities, and importunities of men, might perchance have yielded that to a lover, which they denied to an executioner. St. Cyprian observes that our blessed Lord, in admitting the innocent babes of Bethlehem first to die for him, did to all generations of Christendom consign this lesson, that only persons holy and innocent were fit to be Christ's martyrs. And I remember that the prince of the Latin poets, over against the region and seats of infants, places in the shades below persons that suffered death wrongfully; but adds, that their death was not enough to place them in such blessed mansions, but the judge first made inquiry into their lives, and accordingly designed their station. It is certain that such dyings or great sufferings are heroical actions, and of power to make great compensations, and redemptions of time, and of omissions and imperfections; but if the man be unholy, so also are his sufferings: for heretics have died, and vicious persons have suffered in a good cause, and a dog's neck may be cut off in sacrifice, and swine's blood may fill the trench about the altar: but God only accepts the sacrifice which is pure and spotless, first seasoned with salt, then seasoned with fire. The true martyr must have all the preceding graces, and then he shall receive all the beatitudes.

The acts of this duty are, First, Boldly to confess the faith, nobly to exercise public virtues, not to be ashamed of any thing that is honest, and rather to quit our goods, our liberty, our health, and life itself, than to deny what we are bound to affirm, or to omit what we are bound to do, or to pretend contrary to our present persuasion. Secondly, To rejoice in afflictions;

counting it honourable to be conformable to Christ, and to wear the cognizance of Christianity, whose certain lot it is to suffer the hostility and violence of enemies visible and invisible. Thirdly, Not to revile our persecutors, but to bear the cross with evenness, tranquility, patience, and charity. Fourthly, To offer our sufferings to the glory of God, and to join them with the passions of Christ, by doing it in love to God, and obedience to his sanctions, and testimony of some part of his religion, and designing it as a part of duty. The reward is "the kingdom of heaven;" which can be no other but eternal salvation, in case the martyrdom be consummate: and "they also shall be made perfect;" so the words of the reward were read in Clement's time. If it be less, it keeps its proportion: all suffering persons are the combination of saints, they make the church, they are the people of the kingdom, and heirs of the covenant. For if they be but confessors, and confess Christ in prison, though they never preach upon the rack or under the axe, yet "Christ will confess them before his heavenly Father;" and "they shall have a portion where they shall never be persecuted any more."

THE PRAYER.

1. O blessed Jesus, who art become to us the fountain of peace and sanctity, of righteousness and charity, of life and perpetual benediction, imprint in our spirits these glorious characteristics of Christianity, that we by such excellent dispositions may be conformed to the infinity of blessedness which thou camest to reveal, and minister, and exhibit to mankind. Give us great humility of spirit; and deny us not, when we beg in sorrow of thee, the mourning and sadness of true penitents, that we may imitate thy excellences, and comfort by thy sufferings. Make us meek, patient, and indifferent

and resigned in all accidents, changes and issues of divine providence. Mortify all inordinate anger in us, all wrath, strife, contention, murmurings, malice and envy; and interrupt, and then blot out, all peevish dispositions and morosities, all disturbances and unevenness of spirit or of habit, that may hinder us in our duty. Oh teach me so to hunger and thirst after the ways of righteousness, that it may be meat and drink to me to do thy Father's will. Raise my affections to heaven and heavenly things, fix my heart there, and prepare a treasure for me, which I may receive in the great diffusions and communications of thy glory. And in this sad interval of infirmity and temptations strengthen my hopes, and fortify my faith, by such emissions of light and grace from thy Spirit, that I may relish those blessings which thou preparest for thy saints, with so great appetite, that I may despise the world and all its gilded vanities, and may desire nothing but the crown of righteousness and the paths that lead thither, the graces of thy kingdom and the glories of it; that when I have served thee in holiness and strict obedience, I may reign with thee in the glories of eternity: for thou, O Holy Jesus, art our hope, and our life, and glory, our exceeding great reward. Amen.

2. Merciful Jesu, who art infinitely pleased in demonstrations of thy mercy, and didst descend into a state of misery, suffering persecution and affronts, that thou mightest give us thy mercy, and reconcile us to thy Father, and make us partakers of thy purities; give unto us tender bowels, that we may suffer together with our calamitous and necessitous brethren, that we having a fellow-feeling of their miseries may use all our powers to help them, and ease ourselves of our common sufferings. But do thou, O Holy Jesu, take from us also all our great calamities, the carnality of our affections, our sensualities and impurities, that we may first be pure, then peaceable, living in peace

with all men, and preserving the peace which thou hast made for us with our God, that we may never commit a sin which may interrupt so blessed a reconciliation. Let neither hope nor fear, tribulation nor anguish, pleasure nor pain make us to relinquish our interest in thee, and our portion of the everlasting covenant. But give us hearts constant, bold and valiant, to confess thee before all the world in the midst of all disadvantages and contradictory circumstances, choosing rather to beg, or to be disgraced, or afflicted, or to die, than quit a holy conscience, or renounce an article of Christianity: that we either in act, when thou shalt call us, or always in preparation of mind, suffering with thee, may also reign with thee in the church triumphant, O Holy and most merciful Saviour Jesu. Amen.

DISCOURSE X

A Discourse upon that part of the Decalogue which the Holy Jesus adopted into the institution and obligation of Christianity.

1. When the Holy Jesus had described the characteristics of Christianity in these eight graces and beautitudes, he adds his injunctions, that in these virtues they should be eminent and exemplary, that they might adorn the doctrine of God; for he intended that the gospel should be as leaven in a lump of dough, to season the whole mass, and that Christians should be the instruments of communicating the excellency and reputation of this holy institution to all the world. Therefore Christ calls them salt, and light, and the societies of Christians "a city set upon a hill, and a light set in a candlestick," whose office and energy is to illuminate all the vicinage; which is also ex-

pressed in these preceptive words, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven:" which I consider not only as a circumstance of other parts, but as a precise duty itself, and one of the sanctions of Christianity, which hath so confederated the souls of the disciples of the institution, that it hath in some proportion obliged every man to take care of his brother's soul. And since reverence to God and charity to our brother are the two greatest ends which the best laws can have, this precept of exemplary living is enjoined in order to them both: We must "shine as lights in the world," that God may be glorified, and our brother edified; that the excellency of the act may endear the reputation of the religion, and invite men to confess God according to the sanctions of so holy an institution. And if we be careful that vanity do not mingle in the intention, and that the intention do not spoil the action, and that we suffer not our lights to shine that men may magnify us, and not glorify God, this duty is soon performed by way of adherence to our other actions, and hath no other difficulty in it, but that it will require our prudence and care to preserve the simplicity of our purposes and humility of our spirit in the midst of that excellent reputation which will certainly be consequent to a holy and exemplary life.

2. But since the Holy Jesus had set us up to be lights in the world, he took care we should not be stars of the *least* magnitude, but eminent, and such as might by their great emissions of light give evidence of their being immediately derivative from the sun of righteousness. He was now giving His law, and meant to retain so much of Moses, as Moses had of natural and essential justice and charity, and superadd many degrees of his own; that as far as Moses was exceeded by Christ in the capacity of a law-giver, so far Christianity might be more

excellent and holy than the Mosaical sanctions. And therefore, as a preface to the Christian law, the Holy Jesus declares, that "unless our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees," that is, of the stricter sects of the Mosaical institution, "we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Which not only relates to the prevaricating practices of the pharisees, but even to their doctrines and commentaries upon the law of Moses, as appears evidently in the following instances. For if all the excellency of Christianity had consisted in the mere command of sincerity and prohibition of hypocrisy, it had nothing in it proportionable to those excellent promises and clearest revelations of eternity there expressed, nor of a fit employment for the designation of a special and a new law-giver, whose laws were to last for ever, and were established upon foundations stronger than the pillars of heaven and earth.

3. But St. Paul, calling the law of Moses a law of works, did well insinuate what the doctrine of the Jews was, concerning the degrees and obligations of justice: for besides that it was a law of works in opposition to the law of faith, (and so the sense of it is formerly explicated) it is also a law of works in opposition to the law of the Spirit; and it is understood to be such a law as required the exterior obedience: a law, according to which St. Paul so lived that no man could reprove him, that is, the judges could not tax him with prevarication; such a law as, being in very many degrees carnal and material, did not with much severity exact the intention and purposes spiritual. But the gospel is "the law of the Spirit." If they failed in the exterior work, it was accounted to them for sin; but to Christians nothing becomes a sin, but a failing and prevaricating spirit. For the outward act is such an emanation of the interior, that it enters into the account for the relation sake, and for its purity. When God hath put a duty into our hands, our spirits be

right, the work will certainly follow; but the following work receives its acceptance, not from the value the Christian law hath precisely put upon it, but because the spirit from whence it came hath observed its rule: the law of charity is acted and expressed in works, but hath its estimate from the spirit. Which discourse is to be understood in a limited and qualified signification. For then also God required the heart, and interdicted the very concupiscences of our irregular passions, at least in some instances; but because much of their law consisted in the exterior, and the law appointed not nor yet intimated any penalty to evil thoughts, and because the expiation of such interior irregularities was easy, implicit, and involved in their daily sacrifices without special trouble, therefore the old law was "a law of works," that is, especially and in its first intention. But this being less perfect, the Holy Jesus inverted the order. First, For very little of christianity stands upon the outward action; (Christ having appointed but two sacraments immediately:) and, Secondly, a greater restraint is laid upon the passions, desires, and first notions of the spirit; than under the severity of Moses: and, Thirdly, they are threatened with the same curses of a sad eternity with the acts proceeding from them: and Fourthly, because the obedience of the spirit does in many things excuse the want of the outward act, God always requiring at our hands what he hath put in our power, and no more: and lastly, because the spirit is the principle of all actions moral and spiritual, and certainly productive of them when they are not impeded from without; therefore the Holy Jesus hath secured the fountain, as knowing that the current must needs be healthful and pure, if it proceeds through pure channels from a limpid and unpolluted principle.

4. And certainly it is much for the glory of God, to worship him with a religion whose very design looks upon God as "the searcher of our

hearts" and Lord of our spirits, who judges the purposes as a God, and does not only take his estimate from the outward action as a man. And it is also a great reputation to the institution itself, that it purifies the soul, and secures the secret cogitations of the mind: it punishes covetousness as it judges rapine; it condemns a sacrilegious heart as soon as an irreligious hand; it detests hating of our brother by the same aversion which it expresses against doing him affronts. He that curses in his heart shall die the death of an explicit and bold blasphemer; murmuring and repining, are against the laws of christianity: but either by the remissness of Moses's law, or the gentler execution of it, or the innovating or lessening glosses of the Pharisees, he was esteemed innocent whose actions were according to the letter, not whose spirit was conformed to the intention and more secret sanctity of the law. So that our righteousness must therefore exceed the pharisaical standard, because our spirits must be pure as our hands, and the heart as regular as the action, our purposes must be sanctified, and our thoughts holy; we must love our neighbour as well as relieve him, and choose justice with adhesion of the mind, as well as carry her upon the palms of our hands. And therefore the prophets fortelling the kingdom of the gospel and the state of this religion, call it "a writing the laws of God in our hearts." And St. Paul distinguishes the gospel from the law by this only measure, we are all Israelites, of the seed of Abraham, heirs of the same inheritance; only now we are not to be accounted Jews for the outward conformity to the law, but for the inward consent and obedience to those purities which were secretly signified by the types of Moses. They of the law were Jews outwardly, their "circumcision was outward in the flesh, their praise was of men: we are Jews inwardly, our circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, and our praise is of God; that is, we are

not judged by the outward act, but by the mind and the intention ; and though the acts must follow in all instances where we can and where they are required, yet it is the less principal, and rather significative, than by its own strength and energy operative, and accepted.

5. St. Clements of Alexandria saith, the Pharisees' righteousness consisted in the not doing evil, and that Christ superadded this also, that we must do the contrary good, and so exceed the pharisaical measure. They would not wrong a Jew, nor many times relieve him ; they reckoned their innocence by not giving offence, by walking blameless, by not being accused before the judges sitting in the gates of their cities. But the balance in which the judge of quick and dead weighs Christians is, not only the avoiding evil, but doing good ; the following peace with all men and holiness ; the proceeding from faith to faith ; the adding virtue to virtue ; the persevering in all holy conversation and godliness." And therefore St. Paul, commending the grace of universal charity, says, that "love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law ;" implying, that the prime intention of the law was that every man's right be secured, that no man receive wrong. And indeed all the decalogue consisting of prohibitions rather than precepts, saving that each table hath one positive commandment, does not obscurely verify the doctrine of St. Clement's interpretation. Now because christian charity abstains from doing all injury, therefore it is the fulfilling of the law : but because it is also patient and liberal, suffers long and is kind, therefore the charity commanded in Christ's law exceeds that charity which the Scribes and Pharisees reckoned as part of their righteousness. But Jesus himself does with great care, in the particulars, instance in what he would have the disciples to be eminent above the most strict sect of the Jewish religion : First, in practising

the moral precepts of the decalogue with a stricter interpretation ; Secondly, and in quitting the permissions and licences which, for the hardness of their heart, Moses gave them as indulgences to their persons, and securities against the contempt of too severe laws.

6. The severity of exposition was added but to three commandments, and in three indulgences the permission was taken away. But because our great law-giver repeated also other parts of the decalogue in his after-sermons, I will represent in this one view all that he made to be Christian by adoption.

7. The first commandment Christ often repeated and enforced, as being the basis of all religion, and the first endearment of all that relation whereby we are capable of being the sons of God, as being the great commandment of the law, and comprehensive of all that duty we owe to God in the relations of the virtue of religion : "hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord ; and, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." This is the first commandment, that is, this comprehends all that which is moral and eternal in the first table of the decalogue.

8. The duties of this commandment are first, to worship God alone with actions proper to him, and secondly, to love, and thirdly, obey him with all our faculties. First, concerning worship. The actions proper to the honour of God are, to offer sacrifice, incense and oblations, making vows to him, swearing by his name as the instrument of secret testimony, confessing his incommunicable attributes, and praying to him for those graces which are essentially annexed to his dispensation, as remission of sins, gifts of the Spirit, and the grace of sanctification, and life eternal. Other acts of religion, such as are uncovering the head, bowing the knee, falling upon our face, stopping to the ground, reciting praises, are by the consent of

nations used as testimonies of civil or religious veneration, and do not always pass for confessions of a divinity, and therefore may be without sin used to angels, or kings, or governors, or to persons in any sense more excellent than ourselves, provided they be intended to express an excellency no greater than is *proper* to their dignities and persons; not in any sense given to an idol, or false gods. But the first sort are such which all the world hath consented to be actions of divine and incommunicable adoration, and such which God also in several religions hath reserved as his own appropriate regalities, and are idolatry if given to any angel or man.

9. The next duties are love and obedience; but they are united in the gospel, "this is love, that we keep his commandments:" and since we are for God's sake bound also to love others, this love is appropriate to God by the extension of parts, and the intension of degrees. The extension signifies that we must serve God with all our faculties; for all division of parts is hypocrisy, and a direct prevarication: our heart must think what our tongue speaks, our hands act what we promise or purpose; and God's enemies must have no share, even in appearance or dissimulation. Now no creature can challenge this; and if we do justice to our neighbours, though unwillingly, we have done him no injury; for in that case he only who sees the irregularity of our thoughts is the person injured. And when we swear to him, our heart must swear as well as our tongue, and our hands must pay what our lips have promised; or else we provoke him with an imperfect sacrifice: we love him not with all our mind, with all our strength and all our faculties.

10. But the difficulty and question of this commandment lies in the intention. For it is not enough to serve God with every capacity, passion, and faculty; but it must be every degree of every faculty, all the latitude of our

will, all the whole intenseness of our passions, all the possibility and energy of our senses and our understanding: which because it is to be understood according to that moderate sentence and account which God requires of us as set in the midst of such a condition, so attended, and depressed, and prejudiced, the full sense of it I shall express in several propositions.

11. First, The intension of love to which we are obliged, requires not the degree which is absolutely the greatest and simply the most perfect. For there are degrees of grace, every one of which is pleasing to God, and is a state of reconciliation: and he that "breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax," loves to cherish those endeavours which, beginning from small principles, pass through the variety of degrees, and give demonstration that though it be our duty to contend for the best, yet this contention is with an enemy, and that enemy makes an abatement, and that abatement being an imperfection rather than a sin, is actually consistent with the state of grace, the endeavour being in our power, and not the success; the perfection is that, which shall be our reward, and therefore is not our present duty. And indeed if to do the best action, and to love God as we shall do in heaven, were a present obligation, it would have been clearly taught us what is simply the best action; whereas now that which is of itself better, in certain circumstances is less perfect, and sometimes not lawful; and concerning those circumstances we have no rules, nor any guide but prudence and probable inducements: so that it is certain, in our best endeavours we should only increase our scruples instead of doing actions of the highest perfections, we should erect a tyranny over our consciences, and no augmentation of any thing but the trouble. And therefore in the law of Moses, when this commandment was given in the same words, yet, that the sense of it might be clear.

the analogy of the law declared that their duty had a latitude, and that God was not so strict a taskmaster, but that he left many instances of piety to the voluntary devotion of his servants, that they might receive the reward of free-will offerings. But if these words had obliged them to the greatest degree, that is, to all the degrees of our capacities in every instance, every act of religion had been duty and necessity.

12. And thus also it was in the gospel. Ananias and Sapphira were killed by sentence from heaven for not performing what was in their power at first not to have promised; but because they brought an obligation upon themselves which God brought not, and then prevaricated, they paid the forfeiture of their lives. St. Paul took no wages of the Corinthian churches, but wrought night and day with his own hand; but himself says he had power to do otherwise. There was laid upon him a necessity to preach, but no necessity to preach without wages and support. There is a good and a better in virginity and marriage; and yet there is no command in either, but that we abstain from sin: we are left to our own election for the particular, having no necessity, but power in our will. David prayed seven times a day, and Daniel prayed three times; and both were beloved of God. The christian masters were not bound to manumit their slaves, and yet were commended if they did so. Sometimes the christians fled in persecution; St. Paul did so, and St. Peter did so, and St. Cyprian did so, and St. Athanasius, and many more: but time was, when some of these also chose to suffer death rather than to fly. And if to fly be a permission, and no duty, there is certainly a difference of degrees in the choice; to fly is not so great a suffering as to die, and yet a man may innocently choose the easier. And our blessed Lord himself, who never failed of any degree of his obligations, yet at some time prayed with

more zeal and fervour than at other times, as a little before his passion. Since then at all times he did not do actions of that degree which is absolutely the *greatest*, it is evident that God's goodness is so great, as to be content with such a love as parts no share between him and sin; and leaves all the rest under such a liberty, as is only encouraged by those extraordinary rewards and crowns proportioned to heroical endeavours. It was a pretty question which was moved in the solitudes of Nitria concerning two religious brothers; the one gave all his goods to the poor at once, the other kept the inheritance and gave all the revenue. None of all the fathers knew which was absolutely the better; at once to renounce all, or by a repetition of charitable acts to divide it into portions: one act of charity in an *heroical* degree, or an *habitual* charity in the degree of virtue. This instance is proof enough that the opinion of such a necessity of doing the best action simply and indefinitely is impossible to be safely acted, because it is impossible to be understood. Two talents shall be rewarded, and so shall five, both in their proportions: "He that sows sparingly shall reap sparingly," but he shall reap. "Every man as he purposes in his heart, so let him give." The best action shall have the best reward; and though he is the happiest who rises highest, yet he is not safest that enters into the state of disproportion to his person. I find in the lives of the later reputed saints, that St. Theresa a Jesu made a vow to do every thing which she should judge to be the best. I will not judge the person, nor censure the action, because possibly her intention and desires were of the greatest sanctity; but whosoever considers the story of her life, and the strange repugnances in the life of man to such undertakings, must needs fear to imitate an action of such danger and singularity. The advice which in this case is safest to be followed is, That we employ our

greatest industry, that we fall not into sin and actions of forbidden nature; and then strive by parts and steps, and with much wariness, in attempering our zeal, to superadd degrees of eminency, and observation of the more perfect instances of sanctity; that doing some excellences which God hath not commanded, he may be the rather moved to pardon our prevaricating so many parts of our necessary duty. If love transport us and carry us to actions sublime and heroical, let us follow so good a guide, and pass on with diligence, and zeal, and prudence, as far as love will carry us. But let us not be carried to actions of great eminency and strictness and unequal severities by scruple and pretence of duty; lest we charge our miscarriages upon God, and call the yoke of the gospel insupportable, and Christ a hard taskmaster. But we shall pass from virtue to virtue with more safety, if a spiritual guide take us by the hand; only remembering, that if the angels themselves and the beatified souls do now and shall hereafter differ in degrees of love and glory, it is impossible the state of imperfection should be confined to the highest love, and the greatest degree, and such as admits no variety, no increment or difference of parts and stations.

13. Secondly, Our love to God consists not in any one determinate degree, but hath such a latitude as best agrees with the condition of men, who are of variable natures, different affections and capacities, changeable abilities, and which receive their heightenings and declensions, according to a thousand accidents of mortality. For when a law is regularly prescribed to persons whose varieties and different constitutions cannot be regular or uniform, it is certain God gives a great latitude of performance, and binds not to atoms and points. The laws of God are like universal objects, received into the faculty, partly by choice, partly by nature; but the variety of perfection

is by the variety of the instruments and disposition of the recipient, and are excelled by each other in several senses, and by themselves at several times. And so is the practice of our obedience, and the entertainments of the divine commandments. For some are of malleable natures, others are morose; some are of healthful and temperate constitutions, others are lustful, full of fancy, full of appetite; some have excellent leisure and opportunities of retirement, others are busy in an active life, and cannot with equal advantage attend to the choice of the better part; some are peaceable and timorous, and some are in all instances serene, others are of tumultuous and unquiet spirits: and these become opportunities of temptation on one side, and on the other occasions of a virtue. But every change of faculty and variety of circumstance hath influence upon morality; and therefore their duties are personally altered, and increase in obligation, or are slackened by necessities, according to the infinite alteration of exterior accidents and interior possibilities.

14. Thirdly, our love to God must be totally exclusive of any affection to sin, and engage us upon a great, assiduous, and laborious care to resist all temptations, to subdue sin, to acquire the habits of virtues, and live holily; as is already expressed in the discourse of *Repentance*. We must prefer God as the object of our hopes, we must choose to obey him rather than man, to please him rather than satisfy ourselves, and we must do violence to our strongest passions, when they once contest against a divine commandment. If our passions are thus regulated, let them be fixed upon any lawful object whatsoever, if at the same time we prefer heaven and heavenly things, that is, would rather choose to lose our temporal love than our eternal hopes, (which we can best discern by our refusing to sin upon the solicitation or engagement of the temporal

object;) then, although we feel the transport of earthly love towards a wife, or child, or friend, actually more pungent and sensible than passions of religion are, they are less perfect, but they are not criminal. Our love to God requires that we do his commandments, and that we do not sin; but in other things we are permitted in the condition of our nature to be more sensitively moved by visible than by invisible and spiritual objects. Only this, we must ever have a disposition and a mind prepared to quit our sensitive and pleasant objects, rather than quit a grace, or commit a sin. Every act of sin is against the love of God, and every man does many single acts of hostility and provocation against him; but the state of the love of God is that which we actually call the state of grace. When Christ reigns in us, and sin does not reign, but the spirit is quickened, and the lusts are mortified; when we are habitually virtuous, and do acts of piety, temperance, and justice frequently, easily, cheerfully, and with a successive, constant, moral, and human industry, according to the talent which God hath intrusted to us in the banks of nature and grace; then we are in the love of God, then we "love him with all our heart." But if sin grows upon us, and is committed more frequently, or gets a victory with less difficulty, or is obeyed more readily, or entertained with a freer complacency; then we love not God as he requires, we divide between him and sin, and God is not the Lord of all our faculties. But the instances of Scripture are the best exposition of this commandment: "For David followed God with all his heart, to do that which was right in his eyes;" and "Josiah turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might." Both these kings did it; and yet there was some imperfection in David, and more violent recessions: for so saith the Scripture of Josiah, "Like unto him was there no king before him."

David was not so exact as he, and yet he "followed God with all his heart." From which, these two corollaries are certainly deducible: That to love God with all our heart admits variety of degrees, and the lower degree is yet a love with all our heart; and yet to love God requires a holy life, a diligent walking in the commandments, either according to the sense of innocence or of penitence, either by first or second counsels, by the spirit of regeneration, or the spirit of renovation and restitution. The sum is this—the sense of this precept is such as may be reconciled with the infirmities of our nature, but not with a vice in our manners; with the recession of single acts seldom done, and always disputed against, and long fought with, but not with an habitual aversion, or a ready obedience to sin, or an easy victory.

15. This commandment being the sum of the first table, had in Moses' law particular instances which Christ did not insert into his institution; and he added no other particular, but that which we call the third commandment, concerning veneration and reverence to the name of God. The other two, *viz.* concerning images and the Sabbath, have some special considerations.

The Jews take daily offence against the catechisms of some churches, who, in the recitation of the decalogue, omit the second commandment, as supposing it to be a part of the first, according as we account them; and their offence rises higher, because they observe that in the New Testament, where the decalogue is six times repeated in special recitation and in summaries, there is no word prohibiting the making, retaining, or respect of images. Concerning which things Christians consider, that God forbade to the Jews the very having and making images and representments, not only of the true God, or of false and imaginary Deities, but of visible creatures; which became it was but of

temporary reason, and in relative consideration of their aptness to superstition, and their conversing with idolatrous nations, was a command proper to the nation, part of their covenant; not of essential, indispensable and eternal reason, not of that which we usually call "the law of nature." Of which also God gave testimony, because himself commanded the signs and representment of seraphim to be set upon the mercy-seat, toward which the priest and the people made their addresses in their religious adorations; and of the brazen serpent, to which they looked when they called to God for help against the sting of the venomous snakes. These instances tell us, that to make pictures or statues of creatures is not against a *natural* reason, and that they may have uses which are profitable, as well as be abused to danger and superstition. Now although the nature of that people was apt to the abuse, and their intercourse with the nations in their confines was too great an invitation to entertain the danger, yet Christianity hath so far removed that danger by the analogy and design of the religion, by clear doctrines, revelations, and infinite treasures of wisdom, and demonstrations of the Spirit, that our blessed lawgiver thought it not necessary to remove us from superstition by a prohibition of the use of images and pictures; and therefore left us to the sense of the great commandment, and the dictates of right reason, to take care that we do not dishonour the invisible God with visible representations of what we never saw nor cannot understand, nor yet convey any of God's incommunicable worship in the forenamed instances to any thing but himself. And for the matter of images we have no other rule left us in the New Testament; the rules of reason and nature, and the other parts of the institution, are abundantly sufficient for our security. And possibly St. Paul might relate to this, when he affirmed concerning the fifth, that "it was the first command-

ment with promise." For in the second commandment to the Jews, as there was a great threatening, so also a greater promise of "showing mercy to a thousand generations." But because the body of this commandment was not transcribed into the Christian law, the *first* of the decalogue which we retain, and in which a promise is inserted, is the fifth commandment. And therefore the wisdom of the church was remarkable in the variety of sentences concerning the permission of images. At first, when they were blended in the danger and impure mixtures of Gentilism, and men were newly recovered from the snare, and had the relics of a long custom to superstitious and false worshippings, they endured no images, but merely civil: but as the danger ceased, and Christianity prevailed, they found that pictures had a natural use of good concernment, to move less-knowing people by the representment and declaration of a story; and then they, knowing themselves permitted by the liberties of Christianity and the restraints of nature and reason, and not being still weak under prejudice and childish dangers, but fortified by the excellency of a wise religion, took them into lawful uses, doing honour to saints as unto the absent emperors, according to the custom of the empire; they erected statues to their honour, and transcribed a history, and sometimes a precept, into a table, by figures making more lasting impressions than by words and sentences. While the church stood within these limits, she had natural reason for her warrant, and the custom of the several countries, and no precept of Christ to countermand it: They who went farther were unreasonable, and according to the degree of that excess were superstitions.

The duties of this commandment are learned by the intents of it: for it was directed against the false religion of the nations, who believed the images of their Gods to be filled with the Deity; and it was also a caution to prevent our

low imaginations of God, lest we should come to think God to be like man. And thus far there was indispensable and eternal reason in the precept: and this was never lessened in any thing by the Holy Jesus, and obliges us Christians to make our addresses and worshippings to no God but the God of the Christians, that is, of all the world; and not to do this in or before an image of him, because he cannot be represented. For the images of Christ and his saints, they come not into either of the two considerations, and we are to understand our duty by the proportions of our reverence to God, expressed in the great commandment. Our fathers in Christianity, as I observed now, made no scruple of using the images and pictures of their princes and learned men; which the Jews understood to be forbidden to them in the commandment. Then they admitted even in the utensils of the church some coelatures and engravings. Such was that Tertullian speaks of, "The good Shepherd in the chalice." Afterwards they admitted pictures, but not before the time of Constantine; for in the council of Eliberis they were forbidden. And in succession of time the scruples lessened with the danger, and all the way they signified their belief to be, that this commandment was only so far retained by Christ as it relied upon natural reason, or was a particular instance of the great commandment: that is, images were forbidden where they did dishonour God, or lessen his reputation, or estrange our duties, or became idols, or the direct matter of superstitious observances, charms, or senseless confidences; but they were permitted to represent the humanity of Christ, to remember saints and martyrs, to recount a story, to imprint a memory, to do honour and reputation to absent persons, and to be the instruments of a relative civility and esteem. But, in this particular, infinite care is to be taken of scandal and danger, of a forward and zealous ignorance, or of a

mistaking and peevish confidence; and where a society hath such persons in it, the little good of images must not be violently retained with the greater danger and certain offence of such persons, of whom consideration is to be had in the cure of souls. I only add this, that the first Christians made no scruple of saluting the statues of their princes, and were confident it made no intrenchment upon the natural prohibition contained in this commandment; because they had observed, that exterior inclinations and addresses of the body, though in the lowest manner, were not proper to God, but in Scripture found also to be communicated to creatures, to kings, to prophets, to parents, to religious persons: and because they found it to be death to do affront to the pictures and statues of their emperors, they concluded in reason, (which they also saw verified by the practice and opinion of all the world) that the respect they did at the emperor's statue was accepted as a veneration to his person. But these things are but sparingly to be drawn into religion, because the customs of this world are altered, and their opinions new; and many, who have not weak understandings, have weak consciences; and the necessity for the entertainment of them is not so great as the offence is or may be.

18. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." This our blessed Saviour repeating expresses it thus, "It hath been said to them of old time, [Thou shalt not forswear thyself;] to which Christ adds, out of Numb. xxx. 2, "But thou shalt perform thy oaths unto the Lord." The meaning of the one we are taught by the other. We must not invoke the name of God in any promise in vain, that is, with a lie: which happens either out of levity, that we change our purpose, which at first we really intended; or when our intention at that instant was fallacious, and contradictory to the undertaking. This is to

"take the name of God," that is, to use it, to take it into our mouths, for vanity; that is, according to the perpetual style of Scripture, for a lie. "Every one hath spoken vanity to his neighbour," that is, he hath lied unto him; for so it follows, "with flattering lips, and with a double heart:" and "swearing deceitfully" is by the Psalmist called "lifting up his soul unto vanity." And Philo the Jew, who well understood the law and the language of this nation, renders the sense of this commandment to be, "to call God to witness to a lie." And this is to be understood only in promises, for so Christ explains it by the appendix out of the law, "Thou shalt perform thy oaths." For lying in judgment, which is also with an oath, or taking God's name for witness, is forbidden in the ninth commandment. To this Christ added a farther restraint. For whereas by the natural law it was not unlawful to swear by any oath that implied not idolatry, or the belief of a false God, (I say) any grave and prudent oath, when they speak a grave truth; and whereas it was lawful for the Jews in ordinary intercourse to swear by God, so they did not swear to a lie, (to which also swearing to an impertinency might be reduced by a proportion of reason, and was so accounted of in the practice of the Jews,) but else and in other cases they used to swear by God, or by a creature respectively; (for, "they that swear by him shall be commended," saith the Psalmist; and "swearing to the Lord of hosts" is called "speaking the language of Canaan:") Most of this was rescinded; Christ forbade all swearing, not only swearing to a lie, but also swearing to a truth in *common* affairs; not only swearing commonly by the name of God, but swearing commonly by heaven, and "by the earth, by our head," or by any other oath: only let our speech be yea, or nay, that is, plainly affirming or denying. In these, I say, Christ corrected the license and vanities of the Jews and Gentiles. For as the Jews ac-

counted it religion to name God, and therefore would not swear by him but in the more solemn occasions of their life; but in trifles they would swear by their fathers, or the light of heaven, or the ground they trod on: so the Greeks were also careful not to swear by the gods lightly, much less fallaciously; but they would swear by any thing about them or near them, upon an occasion as vain as their oath. But because these oaths are either indirectly to be referred to God, (and Christ instances in divers) or else they are but a vain testimony, or else they give a divine honour to a creature by making it a judge of truth and discerners of spirits; therefore Christ seems to forbid all forms of swearing whatsoever. In pursuance of which law, Basilides, being converted at the prayers of Potamiæna a virgin-martyr, and required by his fellow-soldiers to swear upon some occasion then happening, answered, it was not lawful for him to swear, for he was a Christian; and many of the fathers have followed the words of Christ in so severe a sense, that their words seem to admit no exception.

19. But here a grain of salt must be taken, lest the letter destroy the spirit. First, it is certain the Holy Jesus forbade a *custom* of swearing; it being great irreligion to despise and lessen the name of God, which is the instrument and conveyance of our adorations to him, by making it common and applicable to trifles and ordinary accidents of our life. He that swears often, many times swears false, and lays by that reverence which, being due to God, the Scripture determines it to be due at his name: His "name is to be loved and feared." And therefore Christ commands that our "communication be yea, yea, or nay, nay;" that is, our ordinary discourses should be simply affirmative or negative. In order to this, Plutarch affirms out of Phavorinus, that the reason why the Greeks forbade children who were about to swear by Hercules, to swear within doors, was, that

by this delay and preparation they might be taught not to be hasty or quick in swearing, but all such invocations should be restrained and retarded by ceremony: and Hercules himself was observed never to have sworn in all his lifetime but once. Secondly, Not only customary swearing is forbidden, but all swearing upon a slight cause. St. Basil upbraids some Christians his contemporaries with the example of Clinias the Pythagorean, who, rather than he would swear, suffered a mulct of three talents. And all the followers of Pythagoras admitted no oath, unless the matter were grave, necessary, and charitable: and the wisest and gravest persons among the heathens were very severe in their counsels concerning oaths. Thirdly, But there are some cases in which the interests of kingdoms and bodies politic, peace and confederacies, require the sanction of promissory oaths; and they whom we are bound to obey, and who may kill us if we do not, require that their interests be secured by an oath: and that in this case, and all that are equal, our blessed Saviour did not forbid oaths, is certain, not only by the example of Christians, but of all the world before and since this prohibition, understanding it to be of the nature of such natural bands and securities, without which commonwealths in some cases are not easily combined, and therefore to be a thing necessary, and therefore not to be forbidden. Now what is by Christians to be esteemed a *slight cause*, we may determine by the account we take of other things. The glory of God is certainly no light matter; and therefore when that is evidently and certainly concerned, not fantastically and by vain and imaginary consequences, but by prudent and true estimation, then we may lawfully swear. We have St. Paul's example, who well understood the precept of his Master, and is not to be supposed easily to have done any violence to it; but yet we find religious affirmations, and God invoked for "witness as a re-

cord upon his soul," in his Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Corinthians. But these oaths were only assertory. Tertullian affirmeth, that Christians refused to swear by the genius of their prince, because it was a demon; but they swore by his health, and their solemn oath was by God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the majesty of the emperor. The fathers of the Ephesine council made Nestorinus and Victor swear; and the bishops at Chalcedon swore by the health of their princes. But as St. Paul did it extrajudicially, when the glory of God was concerned in it and the interest of souls; so the Christians used to swear in a cause of piety and religion, in obedience and upon public command, or for the ends of charity and justice, both with oaths promissory and assertory, as the matter required: with this only difference, that they never did swear in the causes of justice or charity but when they were before a magistrate; but if it were in a cause of religion, and in matters of promise, they did indeed swear among themselves, but always to or in communities and societies, obliging themselves by oath not to commit wickedness, robberies, sacrilege, not to deceive their trust, not to detain the pledge; which rather was an act of direct intercourse with God, than a solemn or religious obligation to man. Which very thing Pliny also reports of the Christians.

The sum is this: Since the whole subject matter of this precept is oaths promissory, or vows, all promises with oaths are regularly forbidden to Christians, unless they be made to God or God's vicegerent, in a matter not trifling. For in the first case, a promise made to God, and a swearing by God to perform the promise to him, is all one. For the name of God being the instrument and determination of all our addresses, we cannot be supposed to speak to God without using of his name explicitly or by implication: and therefore he that

promises to God makes a promise, and uses God's name in the promise; the promise itself being in the nature of a prayer or solemn invocation of God. In the second case, when the public necessity requires it, of which we are not judges, but are under authority, we find the lawfulness by being bound to believe, or not to contradict, the pretence of its necessity; only care is to be taken that the matter be grave or religious, that is, it is to be esteemed and presumed so by us, if the oath be imposed by our lawful superiors, and to be cared for by them: or else it is so to be provided for by ourselves, when our intercourse is with God, as in vows and promises passed to God; being careful that we do not offer to God goat's hair, or the fumes of mushrooms, or the blood of swine, that is, things either impious or vain. But in our communication, that is, in our ordinary intercourse with men, we must promise by simple testimony, not by religious adjurations, though a creature be the instrument of the oath.

21. But this forbids not assertory oaths at all, or deposing in judgment; for of this Christ speaks not here, it being the proper matter of another commandment: and since, as St. Paul affirms, "an oath is the end of all controversy," and that the necessity of commonwealths requires that a period should be fixed to questions, and a rule for the nearest certainty for judgment; whatsoever is necessary is not unlawful, and Christ, who came to knit the bonds of government faster by the stricture of more religious ties, cannot be understood to have given precepts to dissolve the instruments of judicature and prudent government. But concerning assertory oaths, although they are not forbidden, but supposed in the ninth commandment to be done before our judges in the cause of our neighbour: yet because they are only so supposed, and no way else mentioned by permission or intimation, therefore they are to be estimated by the proportions of this precept

concerning promissory oaths: they may be taken in judgment and righteousness, but never lightly, never extra judicially; only a less cause so it be judicial, may authorise an assertory, than a promissory oath; because many cases occur in which peace and justice may be concerned, which without an oath are indeterminable, but there are but few necessities to confirm a promise by an oath. And therefore the reverence of the name of God ought not to be intrenched upon in accidents of little or no necessity: God not having made many necessities in this case, would not in a matter of promise give leave to use his name but when an extraordinary case happens. An oath in promises is of no use for ending questions and giving judicial sentences; and the faith of a christian, and the word of a just person will do most of the work of promises: and it is very much to the disreputation of our religion or ourselves, if we fall into hypocrisy or deceit, or if a christian asseveration were not of value equal with an oath. And therefore Christ forbidding promissory oaths, and commanding so great simplicity of spirit and honesty, did so, consonantly to the design and perfection of his institution, intending to make us so just and sincere, that our religion being infinite obligation to us, our own promises should pass for bond enough to others, and the religion receive great honour by being esteemed a sufficient security and instrument of public intercourse. And thus was intimated by our Lord himself, in that reason he is pleased to give of the prohibition of swearing: "Let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more cometh of evil." That is, as good laws come from ill manners, the modesty of clothing from the shame of sin, antidotes and physic by occasion of poison and diseases: so is swearing an effect of distrust, and want of faith or honesty, on one or both sides. Men dare not trust the word of a christian, or a christian is

not just and punctual to his promises, and this calls for confirmation by an oath. So that oaths suppose a fault, though they are not faults always themselves; whatsoever is more than yea or nay, is not always evil, but it always *cometh* of evil. And therefore the Essenes esteemed every man that was put to his oath no better than an infamous person, a perjurer, or at least suspected, not esteemed a just man: and the heathens would not suffer the priest of Jupiter to swear, because all men had great opinion of his sanctity and authority; and the Scythians derided Alexander's caution and timorous provision, when he required an oath of them; "Our faith is our bond." And they who are willing to deceive men will not stick to deceive God, when they have called God to witness. But I have a caution to insert for each, which I propound as an humble advice to persons eminent and publicly interested.

22. First, that princes, and such as have power of decreeing the injunction of promissory oaths, be very curious and reserved, not lightly enjoining such promises, neither in respect of the matter trivial, nor yet frequently, nor without great reason enforcing. The matter of such promises must be only what is already matter of duty or religion; for else the matter is not grave enough for the calling of God to testimony: but when it is a matter of duty, then the oath is no other than a vow or promise made to God in the presence of men. And because Christians are otherwise very much obliged to do all which is their duty in matters both civil and religious, of obedience and piety; therefore it must be an instant necessity and a great cause to superinduce such a confirmation as derives from the so sacredly invoking the name of God; it must be when there is great necessity that the duty be actually performed, and when the supreme power either hath not power sufficient to punish the delinquent, or may miss to have notice of the defect. For in

these cases it is reasonable to bind the faith of the obliged persons by the fear of God after a more special manner; but else, there is no reason sufficient to demand of the subjects any farther security than their own faith and contract. The reason of this advice relies upon the strictness of the words of this precept against promissory oaths, and the reverence we owe to the name of God. Oaths of allegiance are fit to be imposed in a troubled state or to a mutinous people. But it is not so fit to tie the people by oath to abstain from transportations of metal, or grain, or leather, from which by penalties they are with as much security, and less suspicion of iniquity, restrained.

23. Secondly, Concerning assertory oaths and depositions in judgment, although a greater liberty may be taken in the subject matter of the oath, and we may, being required to it, swear in judgment, though the cause be a question of money, or our interest, or the rights of a society: and St. Athanasius purged himself by oath before the emperor Constantius; yet it were a great pursuance and security of this part of the christian religion, if in no case *contrary* oaths might be admitted, in which it is certain one part is perjured to the ruin of their souls, to the intricating of the judgment, to the dishonour of religion; but that such rules of prudence and reasonable presumption be established, that upon the oath of that party which the law shall choose, and upon probable grounds shall presume for, the sentence may be established. For by a smaller probability there may a surer judgment be given, than upon the confidence of contradictory oaths, and after the sin the judge is left to the uncertainty of conjectures as much as if but one part had sworn; and to much more, because such an oath is by the consent of all men accepted as a rule to determine in judgment. By these discourses we understand the intention of our blessed Master in this precept: and I wish by this or

any thing else men would be restrained from that low, cheap, unreasonable, and unexcusable vice of customary swearing, to which we have nothing to invite us that may lessen the iniquity: for which we cannot pretend temptation nor allege infirmity; but it begins by recklessness and a malicious carelessness, and is continued by the strength of habit and the greatest immensity of folly. And I consider that Christian religion, being so holy an institution, to which we are invited by so great promises, in which we are instructed by so clear revelations, and to the performance of our duties compelled by the threatnings of a sad and insupportable eternity, should more than sufficiently endear the performance of this duty to us. The name of a Christian is a high and potent antidote against all sin, if we consider aright the honour of the name, the undertaking of our covenant, and the reward of our duty. The Jews eat no swines' flesh, because they are of Moses; and the Turks drink no wine, because they are Mahometans; and yet we swear, for all we are Christians; than which there is not in the world a greater conviction of our baseness and irreligion. Is the authority of the Holy Jesus so despicable? are his laws so unreasonable, his rewards so little, his threatnings so small, that we must needs in contempt of all this profane the great name of God, and trample under foot the laws of Jesus, and cast away the hopes of heaven, and enter into security to be possessed by hell-torments for swearing, that is, for speaking like a fool, without reason, without pleasure, without reputation, much to our disesteem, much to the trouble of civil and wise persons with whom we join in society and intercourse? Certainly hell will be heated seven times hotter for a customary swearer, and every degree of his unreasonableness will give him a new degree of torment, when he shall find himself in flames for being a stupid, an atheistical, an irreligious fool. This only I

desire should be observed, that our blessed Master forbids not only swearing by God, but by any creature; for every oath by a creature does involve and tacitly relate to God. And therefore saith Christ, "swear not by heaven, for it is the throne of God;" and he that sweareth by the throne of God, "sweareth by it, and by him that sitteth thereon." So that it is not a less matter to swear by a creature than to swear by God; for a creature cannot be the instrument of testimony, but as it is a relative to God; and it by implication calls the God of that creature to witness. So that although in such cases in which it is permitted to swear by God, we may in those cases express our oath in the form of advocating and calling the creature, (as did the primitive Christians swearing by the health of their emperor, and as Joseph swearing by the life of Pharaoh, and as Elisha swearing by the life of Elias, and as did St. Paul protesting "by the rejoicing he had in Jesus Christ," and as we in our forms of swearing in courts of judicature touch the gospels, saying, "So help me God, and the contents of this book;" and in a few ages, lately past, bishops and priests sometimes swore upon the cross, sometimes upon the altar, sometimes by their holy order:) yet we must remember that this in other words and ceremonies is but a calling God for witness; and he that swears by the cross, swears by the holy crucifix, that is, Jesus crucified thereon. And therefore these and the like forms are therefore not to be used in ordinary communication, because they relate to God; they are as obligatory as the immediate invocation of his holiness and majesty; and it was a judicial vanity to think swearing by creatures was less obliging: they are just with the same restraints made to be religious as the most solemn invocation of the holy and reverend name of God, lawful or unlawful as the other: unless the swearing by a creature come to be spoiled by some other intervening circumstance, that

is, with a denying it to relate to God ; for then it becomes superstition as well as profanation, and it gives to a creature what is proper to God ; or when the creature is contemptible, or less than the gravity of the matter, as if a man should swear by a fly, or the shadow of a tree ; or when there is an indecorum in the thing, or something that does at too great distance relate to God : for that which with greatest vicinity refers to God in several religions is the best instrument of an oath, and nearest to God's honour ; as in Christianity are the holy sacrament, the cross, the altar, and the gospels ; and therefore too great a distance may be an indecency next to a disparagement. This only may be added to this consideration ; that although an oath, which is properly calling God or God's relative into testimony, is to be understood according to the former discourse ; yet there may be great affirmations or negations respectively, and confirmed by forms of vehement asseveration, such as the customs of a nation or consent shall agree upon : and those do in some cases promote our belief or confirm our pretensions better than a plain yea or no ; because by such consent the person renders himself infamous if he breaks his word or trust. And although this will not come under the restraint of Christ's words, because they are not properly oaths, but circumstances of earnest affirmation or negation ; yet these are humane attestations, introduced by custom or consent, and as they come not under the notion of swearing, so they are forms of testimony and collateral engagement of a more strict truth.

24. The Holy Jesus having specified the great commandment of "loving God with all our heart," in this one instance of hallowing and keeping his name sacred, that is, from profane and common talk, and less prudent and unnecessary intercourses, instanced in no other commandment of Moses : but having frequent occasion to speak of the Sabbath, for ever ex-

presses his own dominion over the day, and that he had dissolved the bands of Moses in this instance ; that now we were no more obliged to that rest which the Jews religiously observed by prescript of the law ; and by divers acts against securities of the then received practices did He desecrate the day, making it a broken yoke, and the first great instance of Christian liberty. And when the apostle gave instructions that "no man should judge his brother in a holy-day, or new-moons, or the Sabbath days," he declared all the judicial feasts to be obliterated by the sponge which Jesus tasted on the cross ; it was within the manuscript of ordinances, and there it was cancelled. And there was nothing moral in it, but that we do honour to God for the creation, and to that and all other purposes of religion, separate and hallow some portion of our time. The primitive church kept both the Sabbath and the Lord's day till the time of the Laodicean council, about three hundred years after Christ's nativity, and almost in every thing made them equal ; and therefore did not esteem the Lord's day to be substituted in the place of the obliterated Sabbath, but a feast celebrated by great reason and perpetual consent, without precept or necessary divine injunction. But the liberty of the church was great : they found themselves freed from that strict and necessary rest, which was one great part of the Sabbatic rites : only they were glad of the occasion to meet often for offices of religion, and the day served well for the gaining and facilitating the conversion of the Jews, and for the honourable sepulture of the synagogue ; it being kept so long, like the forty days of mourning of Israel for the death of their father Jacob ; but their liberty they improved not to licence, but as an occasion of more frequent assemblies. And there is something in it for us to imitate, even to sanctify the name of God in the great work of the creation, reading his praises in the book

of his creatures, and taking all occasions of religious acts and offices, though in none of the Jewish circumstances.

25. Concerning the observation of the Lord's Day, which now the church observes and ever did in remembrance of the resurrection, because it is a day of positive and ecclesiastical institution, it is fit that the church, who instituted the day, should determine the manner of its observation. It was set apart in honour of the resurrection, and it were not ill if all churches would into the weekly offices put some memorial of that mystery, that the reason of the festival might be remembered with the day, and God thanked with the renewing of the offices. But because religion was the design of the feast, and leisure was necessary for religion, therefore to abstain from suits of law and servile works, but such works as are of necessity and charity, (which to observe are of themselves a very good religion) is a necessary duty of the day; and to do acts of public religion is the other part of it. So much is made matter of duty by the intervention of authority: and though the church hath made no more prescriptions in this, and God hath made none at all; yet he who keeps the day most strictly, most religiously, he keeps it best, and most consonant to the design of the church, and the ends of religion, and the opportunity of the present leisure, and the interests of his soul. The acts of religion proper for the day are prayers and public liturgies, preaching, catechising, acts of charity, visiting sick persons, acts of eucharist to God, of hospitality to our poor neighbours, of friendliness and civility to all, reconciling differences; and after the public assemblies are dissolved, any act of direct religion to God, or of ease and remission to servants, or whatsoever else is good in manners, or in piety, or in mercy. What is said of this great feast of the christians is to be understood to have a greater severity and obligation in the anniversary of the Resurrection, of the Ascension,

of the Nativity, of our blessed Saviour, and of the Descent of the Holy Spirit in Pentecost. And all days festival to the honour of God in remembrance of the holy apostles, and martyrs, and departed saints, as they are with prudence to be chosen and retained by the church, so as not to be unnecessary, or burthensome, or useless; so they are to be observed by us as instances of our love of the communion of saints, and our thankfulness for the blessing and the example.

26. "Honour thy father and thy mother." This commandment Christ made also to be christian by his frequent repetition and mention of it in his sermons and laws, and so ordered it, that it should be the band of civil government and society. In the decalogue God sets this precept immediately after the duties that concern himself, our duty to parents being in the confines with our duty to God, the parents being in order of nature next to God, the cause of our being and production, and the great almoners of eternity, conveying to us the essences of reasonable creatures, and the charities of heaven. And when our blessed Saviour in a sermon to the Pharisees spake of duty to parents, he rescued it from the impediments of a vain tradition, and secured this duty, though against a pretence of religion towards God, telling us that God would not himself accept a gift which we took from our parent's needs. "This duty to parents is the very firmament and band of commonwealths. He that honours his parents will also love his brethren derived from the same loins, he will dearly account of all his relatives and persons of the same cognation; and so families are united, and of them cities and societies are framed. And because parents and patriarchs of families and of nations had regal power, they who by any change succeeded in the care and government of cities and kingdoms succeeded in the power and authority of fathers, and became so in estimate of law and true

divinity to all their people. So that the duty here commanded is due to all our fathers in the sense of scripture and laws, not only to our natural, but to our civil fathers, that is, to kings and governors. And the scripture adds mothers, for they also, being instruments of the blessing, are the objects of the duty. The duty is, honour, that is, reverence and support, if they shall need it. And that which our blessed Saviour calls "not honouring our parents" in St. Matthew, is called in St. Mark "doing nothing for them;" and honour is expounded by St. Paul to be maintenance as well as reverence. Then we honour our parents, if with great readiness we minister to their necessities, and communicate our estate, and attend them in sicknesses, and supply their wants, and, as much as lies in us, give them support, who gave us being.

27. "Thou shalt do no murder:" so it was said to them of old time. He that kills shall be guilty of judgment, that is, he is to die by the sentence of the judge. To this Christ makes an appendix, "But I say unto you, he that is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." This addition of our blessed Saviour, as all the others, which are severer explications of the law than the Jews admitted, was directed against the vain and imperfect opinion of the lawyers, who thought to be justified by their external works; supposing, if they were innocent in matter of fact, God would require no more of them than man did, and what by custom or silence of the laws was not punishable by the judge, was harmless before God; and this made them to trust in the letter, to neglect the duties of repentance, to omit asking pardon for their secret irregularities, and the obliquities and aversations of their spirits; and this St. Paul also complains of, that neglecting "the righteousness of God, they sought to establish their own," that is, according to man's judgment. But our blessed

Saviour tells them that such an innocence is not enough; God requires more than conformity and observation of the fact, and exterior piety; placing justice not in legal innocency, or not being condemned in judgment of the law and human judicature, but in the righteousness of the spirit also: for the first acquits us before man, but by this we shall be held upright in judgment before the Judge of all the world. And therefore besides abstinence from murder or actual wounds, Christ forbids all "anger without cause against our brother," that is, against any man.

28. By which not the first motions are forbidden, the twinklings of the eye, as the philosophers call them, the pro-passions and sudden and irresistible alterations; for it is impossible to prevent them, unless we could give ourselves a new nature, any more than we can refuse to wink with our eye when a sudden blow is offered at it, or refuse to yawn when we see a yawning sleepy person: but by frequent and habitual mortification, and by continual watchfulness, and standing in readiness against all inadvertencies, we shall lessen the inclination, and account fewer sudden irruptions. A wise and meek person should not kindle at all, but after violent and great collision; and then, if like a flint he sends a spark out, it must as soon be extinguished as it shines, and cool as soon as it sparkles. But however, the sin is not in the natural disposition. But when we entertain it, though it be, as Seneca expresses it, *cum voluntate non contumaci*, without a determination of revenge, then it begins to be a sin. Every indignation against the person of the man, in us is pride and self love, and towards others ungentleness, and an implacable spirit. Which is to be understood, when the cause is not sufficient, or when the anger continues longer, or is excessive in the degrees of its proportion.

29. The causes of allowable anger are, when

we see God dishonoured, or a sin committed, or any irregularity, or fault in matter of government; a fault against the laws of a family or good manners, disobedience or stubbornness; which in all instances where they may be prudently judged such by the governor, yet possibly they are not all direct sins against God and religion. In such cases we may be angry. But then we may also sin, if we exceed in time, or measure of degree.

30. The proportion of time St. Paul expresses, by "not letting the sun set upon our anger." Leontius Patricius was one day extremely and unreasonably angry with John the patriarch of Alexandria; at evening the patriarch sent a servant to him with this message, "Sir, the sun is set:" upon which Patricius reflecting, and the grace of God making the impression deep, visible, and permanent, he threw away his anger, and became wholly subject to the counsel and ghostly aids of the patriarch. This limit St. Paul borrowed from the Psalmist: for that which in the fourth Psalm verse 5, we read, "Stand in awe, and sin not," the Septuagint reads, "Be angry, but sin not." And this measure is taken from the analogy of the law of the Jews, that the malefactor should not hang upon the accursed tree after the sun was set: and if the laws laid down their just anger against malefactors as soon as the sun descended and took off his beams from beholding the example; much more is it reasonable that a private anger, which is not warranted by authority, not measured by laws, not examined by solemnities of justice, not made reasonable by considering the degree of the causes, not made charitable by intending the public good, not secured from injuriousness by being disinterested, and such an anger in which the party is judge, and witness, and executioner; it is (I say) but reason such an anger should unyoke and go to bed with the sun, since justice and authority laid by the rods and axes as soon as the sun unteamed his

chariot. Plutarch reports that the Pythagoreans were strict observers of the very letter of this caution: for if anger had boiled up to the height of injury or reproach, before sunset they would shake hands, salute each other, and depart friends: for they were ashamed that the same anger which had disturbed the counsels of the day should also trouble the quiet and dreams of the night, lest anger by mingling with their rest and nightly fancies should grow natural and habitual. Well, anger must last no longer; but neither may a Christian's anger last so long; for if his anger last a whole day, it will certainly before night soar into crime. A man's anger is like a spleen, at the first it is natural, but in its excess and distemper it swells into a disease: and therefore although to be angry at the presence of certain objects is natural, and therefore is indifferent, because he that is an essential enemy to sin never made sin essential to a man: yet unless it be also transient and pass off at the command of reason and religion, it quickly becomes criminal. The meaning is, that it be no more but a transient passion, not permanent at all, but that the anger against the man pass into indignation against the crime, and pity of the person, till the pity grows up into endeavours to help him. For an angry, violent and disturbed man is like that white bramble of Judea, of which Josephus reports, that it is set on fire by impetuous winds, and consumes itself, and burns the neighbouring plants: and the evil effects of a violent and passionate anger are so great, so dangerous, so known to all the world, that the very consideration of them is the best argument in the world to dispute against it; families and kingdoms have suffered horrid calamities; and whatsoever is violent in art or nature hath been made the instrument of sadness in the hands of anger.

31. The measure of the degree is to be estimated by human prudence, that it exceed

not the value of the cause, nor the proportion of other circumstances, and that it cause no eruption into indiscretions or indecencies. For therefore Moses' anger, though for God and religion, was reprov'd, because it went forth into a violent and troubled expression, and shewed the degree to be inordinate. For it is in this passion as in lightning, which, if it only breaks the cloud and makes a noise, shews a tempest and disturbance in nature, but the hurt is none: but if it seizes upon a man, or dwells upon a house, or breaks a tree, it becomes a judgment and a curse. And as the one is a mischief in chance and accident, so the other is in morality and choice: if it passes from passion into action: from a transient violence to a permanent injury: if it abides, it scorches the garment or burns the body; and there is no way to make it innocent, but to remove and extinguish it, and, while it remains, to tie the hands, and pare the nails, and muzzle it, that it may neither scratch, nor bite, nor talk. An anger in God's cause may become unhallowed, if it sees the sun rise and set: and an anger in the cause of a man is innocent according to the degrees of its suddenness and discontinuance: for by its quickness and volatile motion it shows that it was First, Unavoidable in its production, or Secondly, That it was harmless in the event, or Thirdly, Quickly suppressed: according to which several cases anger is either First, Natural, or Secondly, Excusable, or Thirdly, The matter of a virtue.

32. The vulgar Latin Bible, in this precept of our blessed Saviour, reads not the appendix, "without a cause, but indefinitely, "he that is angry with his brother;" and St. Hierom affirms that the clause "without a cause" is not to be found in the true Greek copies: upon supposition of which, because it is not to be imagined that all anger in all causes and in all degrees is simply unlawful, and St. Paul distinguishes being angry from committing a sin,

"Be angry, but sin not," these words are left to signify such an anger as is the crime of homicide in the heart, like the secret lusting called by Christ "adultery in the heart;" and so here is forbidden not only the outward act, but the inward inclinations to murder, that is, an anger with deliberation and purpose of revenge, this being explicative and additional to the precept forbidding murder: which also our blessed Saviour seems to have intended, by threatening the same penalty to this anger or spiritual homicide, which the law inflicted upon the actual and external, that is, judgment or condemnation. And because this prohibition of anger is an explication and more severe commentary upon the sixth commandment, it is more than probable that this anger, to which condemnation is threatened, is such an anger as hath entertained something of mischief in the spirit. And this agrees well enough with the former interpretation, save that it affirms no degree of anger to be criminal as to the height of condemnation, unless it be with a thought of violence or desires of revenge; the other degrees receiving their heightenings and declensions as they keep their distance or approach to this. And besides, by not limiting or giving caution concerning the cause, it restrains the malice only or the degree, but it permits other causes of anger to be innocent besides those spiritual and moral, of the interests of God's glory and religion. But this is also true, whichever of the readings be retained. For the irascible faculty having in nature an object proper to its constitution and natural design, if our anger be commenced upon an object naturally troublesome, the anger is very natural, and nowhere said to be irregular. And he who is angry with a servant's unwariness or inadvertency, or the remissness of a child's spirit and application to his studies, or on any sudden displeasure, is not in any sense guilty of prevaricating the sixth commandment, unless besides the object he

adds an inequality of degree, or unhandsome circumstance or adjunct. And possibly it is not in the nature of man to be strict in discipline, if the prohibitions of anger be confined only to causes of religion; and it were hard that such an anger which is innocent in all effects, and a good instrument of government, should become criminal and damnable; because some instances of displeasure are in actions not certainly and apparently sinful. So that our blessed Saviour forbidding us to be angry without a cause, means such causes which are not only irregularities in religion, but deflections in manners; and an anger may be religious, and political, and economical, according as it meets with objects proper to it in several kinds. It is sometimes necessary that a man carry a tempest in his face and a rod in his hand; but for ever let him have a smooth mind, or at least under command, and within the limits of reason and religion, that he may steer securely, and avoid the rocks of sin: for then he may reprove a friend that did amiss, or chastise an offending son, or correct a vicious servant. The sum is this: there are no other bounds to hallow or to allow and legitimate anger but that, 1. The cause be religion, or matter of government. 2. That the degree of the anger in prudent accounts be no bigger than the cause. 3. That if it goes forth, it be not expressed in any action of uncharitableness, or unseasonable violence. 1. Whether it goes forth or abides at home, it must not dwell long anywhere: nor abide in the form of a burning coal, but at the most of a thin flame, thence passing into air salutary and gentle, fit to breathe, but not to blast. There is this only nicety to be observed: that although an anger arising for religion, or in the matter of government, cannot innocently abide long; yet it may abide till it hath passed forth into its proper and temperate expression, whether of reprehension or chastisement, and then it must sit down. But if the anger arises from

another cause, (provided it be of itself innocent, not sinful in the object or cause) the passion in its first spring is also innocent, because it is natural and on the sudden, unavoidable: but this must be suppressed within, and is not permitted to express itself at all: for in that degree in which it goes out of the mouth, or through the eyes, or from the hand, in that degree it is violent, ought to be corrected and restrained; for so that passion was intended to be turned into virtue. For this passion is like its natural parent or instrument: and if choler keeps in its proper seat, it is an instrument of digestion; but if it goes forth into the stranger regions of the body, it makes a fever: and this anger which commences upon natural causes, though so far as it is natural it must needs be innocent, yet when any consent of the will comes to it, or that it goes forth in any action or voluntary signification, it also becomes criminal. Such an anger is only permitted to be born and die: but it must never take nourishment, or exercise any act of life.

33. But if that prohibition be indefinite, then it is certain the analogy of the commandment, of which this is an explication, refers it to revenge or malice: it is an anger that is wrath, an anger of revenge or injury, which is here prohibited. And I add this consideration, that since it is certain that Christ intended this for an explication of the prohibition of homicide, the clause of (without cause) seems less natural and proper. For it would intimate, that though anger of revenge is forbidden when it is rash and unreasonable; yet that there might be a cause of being angry with a purpose of revenge and recompence, and that in such a case it is permitted to them to whom in all other it is denied, that is, to private persons; which is against the meekness and charity of the gospel. More reasonable it is, that as no man might kill his brother in Moses' law by his own private

authority ; so an anger is here forbidden, such an anger which no qualification can permit to private persons, that is, an anger with purposes of revenge.

34. But Christ adds, that a farther degree of this sin is, when our anger breaks out in contumelies and ill language, and receives its increment according to the degree and injury of the reproach. There is a homicide in the tongue as well as in the heart ; and he that kills a man's reputation by calumnies, or slander, or open reviling, hath broken this commandment. But this is not to be understood so, but that persons in authority or friends may reprehend a vicious person in language proper to his crime, or expressive of his malice or iniquity. Christ called Herod " fox : " and although St. Michael brought not " a railing accusation against Satan," yet the scripture calls him an accuser ; and Christ calls him " the father of lies," and St. Peter, " a devourer," and a " roaring lion : " and St. John calls Diotrephes " a lover of pre-eminence," or ambitious. But that which is here forbidden, is not a representing the crimes of the man for his emendation, or any other charitable or religious end, but a reviling him to do him mischief, to murder his reputation : which also shews, that whatever is here forbidden is in some sense or other accounted homicide ; the anger in order to reproach, and both in order to murder, subject to the same punishment, because forbidden in the same period of the law ; save only that, according to the degrees of the sin, Christ proportions several degrees of punishment in the other world, which he apportions to the degrees of death which had ever been among the Jews, *viz.* the sword and stoning to death which were punishments legal and judicial, and the burning infants in the valley of Hinnom, which was a barbarous and superstitious custom, used formerly by their fathers, in imitation of the Phœnician accursed rites.

35. The remedies against anger, which are prescribed by masters of spiritual life, are partly taken from rules of prudence, partly from piety and more precise rules of religion. In prudence.

1. Do not easily entertain, or at all encourage, or willingly hear, or promptly believe tale-bearers and reporters of other men's faults : for oftentimes we are set on fire by an *ignis fatuus*, a false flame, and an empty story. 2. Live with peaceable people, if thou canst. 3. Be not inquisitive into the misdemeanours of others, or the reports which are made of you. 4. Find out reasons of excuse to alleviate and lessen the ignorances of a friend, or carelessness of a servant. 5. Observe what object is aptest to inflame thee, and by special arts of fortification stop up the avenues to that part : if losses, if contempt, if incivilities, if slander, still make it the greatest part of your employment to subdue the impotency of that passion that is more apt to raise tempests. 6. Extirpate petty curiosities of apparel, lodging, diet, and learn to be indifferent to circumstances ; and if you be apt to be transported with such little things, do some great thing that shall cut off their frequent intervening. 7. Do not multiply secular cares, and troublesome negociations, which have variety of conversation with several humours of men and accidents of things : but frame to thyself a life simple if thou canst, and free from all affectations. 8. Sweeten thy temper and allay the violence of thy spirit with some convenient, natural, temperate and medicinal solaces ; for some dispositions we have seen inflamed into anger, and often assaulted by peevishness, through immoderate fasting and inconvenient austerities. 9. A gentle answer is an excellent remora to the progresses of anger, whether in thyself or others. For anger is like the waves of a troubled sea ; when it is corrected with a soft reply, as with a little strand, it retires, and leaves nothing behind it but froth and shells ; no permanent mischief. 10. Silence is an

excellent art: and that was the advice which St. Isaac, an old religious person in the primitive church, is reported to have followed, to suppress his anger within his breast, and use what means he could there to strangle it; but never permitting it to go forth in language: anger and lust being like fire, which if you enclose, suffering it to have no emission, it perishes and dies; but give it the smallest vent, and it rages to a consumption of all it reaches. And this advice is coincident with the general rule which is prescribed in all temptations, that anger be suppressed in its cradle and first assaults. 11. Lastly, let every man be careful that in his repentance, or in his zeal, or his religion, he be as dispassionate and free from anger as is possible; lest anger pass upon him in a reflex act, which was rejected in the direct. Some mortifiers in their contestation against anger, or any evil or troublesome principle, are like criers of assizes, who calling for silence make the greatest noise; they are extremely angry when they are fighting against the habit or violent inclinations to anger.

36. But in the way of more strict religion it is advised, that he who would cure his anger should pray often. It is St. Austin's counsel to the bishop Auxilius, that like the apostles in a storm, we should awaken Christ, and call to him for aid, lest we shipwreck in so violent passions and impetuous disturbances. 2. Propound to thyself the example of meek and patient persons; remembering always that there is a family of meek saints, of which Moses is the precedent; a family of patient saints, under the conduct of Job: every one in the mountain of the Lord shall be gathered to his own tribe, to his own family, in the great day of jubilee: and the angry shall perish with the effects of anger: and peevish persons shall be vexed with the disquietness of an eternal worm and sting of a vexatious conscience, if they suffer here the transportations and saddest effects of an un-

mortified, habitual, and prevailing anger. 3. Above all things endeavour to be humble, to think of thyself as thou deservest, that is, meanly and unworthily; and in reason it is to be presumed thou wilt be more patient of wrong, quiet under affronts and injuries, susceptible of inconveniences, and apt to entertain all adversities, as instruments of humiliation, deleteries of vice, corrections of undecent passions, and instruments of virtue. 4. All the reason, and all the relations, and all the necessities of mankind are daily arguments against the violences and inordinations of anger. For he that would not have his reason confounded, or his discourse useless, or his family be a den of lions; he that would not have his marriage a daily duel, or his society troublesome, or his friendship formidable, or his feasts bitter; he that delights not to have his discipline cruel, or his government tyrannical, or his disputations violent, or his civilities unmanly, or his charity be a rudeness, or himself brutish as a bear, or peevish as a fly, or miserable upon every accident and in all the changes of his life, must mortify his anger. For it concerns us as much as peace, and wisdom, and nobleness, and charity, and felicity are worth, to be at peace in our breasts, and to be pleased with all God's providence, and to be in charity with every thing, and with every man.

37. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." These two commandments are immediate to each other, and of the greatest cognation: for anger and lust work upon one subject; and the same fervours of blood which make men revengeful, will also make men unchaste. But the prohibition is repeated in the words of the old commandment: so "it was said to them of old:" which was not only a prohibition of the violation of the rights of marriage, but was even among the Jews extended to signify all mixture of sexes not matrimonial. For adultery in scripture is sometimes used to signify forni-

cation, and fornication for adultery; as it is expressed in the permissions of divorce in the case of fornication: and by Moses' law fornication also was forbidden, and it was hated also and reprov'd in the natural. But it is very probable that this precept was restrained only to the instance of adultery in the proper sense, that is, violation of marriage; for Moses did in other annexes of the law forbid fornication. And as a blow or wound was not esteemed in Moses' law a breach of the sixth commandment; so neither was any thing but adultery esteemed a violation of the seventh by very many of their own doctors: of which I reckon this a sufficient probation, because they permitted stranger virgins and captives to fornicate; only they believed it sinful in the Hebrew maidens. And when two harlots pleaded before Solomon for the bastard child, he gave sentence of their question, but nothing of their crime. Strangers with the Hebrews signified many times harlots, because they were permitted to be such, and were entertained to such purposes. But these were the licences of a looser interpretation; God having to all nations given sufficient testimony of his detestation of all concubinate not hallowed by marriage: of which among the nations there was abundant testimony, in that the harlots were not permitted to abide in the cities, and wore veils in testimony of their shame and habitual indecencies; which we observe in the story of Tamar, and also in Chrysippus. And although it passed without punishment, yet never without shame, and a note of turpitude. And the abstinence from fornication was one of the precepts of Noah, to which the Jews obliged the stranger proselytes who were only proselytes of the house: and the apostles enforce it upon the Gentiles in their first decree at Jerusalem, as renewing an old stock of precepts and obligations, in which all the converted and religious Gentiles did communicate with the Jews.

38. To this Christ added, that the eyes must not be adulterous; his disciples must not only abstain from the act of unlawful concubinate, but from the impure intuition of a wife of another man: so according to the design of his whole sermon opposing the righteousness of the spirit to that of the law, or of works, in which the Jews confided. Christians must have chaste desires, not indulging to themselves a liberty of looser thoughts; keeping the threshold of their temples pure, that the Holy Ghost may observe nothing unclean in the entry of his habitation. For he that lusts after a woman wants nothing to the consummation of the act but some convenient circumstances; which because they are not in our power the act is impeded, but nothing of the wish abated. But so severe in this was our blessed Master, that he commanded us rather to "put our eyes out" than to suffer them to become an offence to us, that is, an inlet of sin, or an invitation or transmission of impurity: by "putting our eye out," meaning the extinction of all incentives of lust, the rejection of all opportunities and occasions, the quitting all conditions of advantage which ministers fuel to this hell fire. And by this severity we must understand all beginnings, temptations, likenesses, and insinuations and minutes of lust and impurity to be forbidden to Christians; such are all morose delectations in vanity, wanton words, gestures, balls, revellings, wanton diet, garish and lascivious dressings and trimmings of the body, looser banquetings: all "making provisions for the flesh to fulfil the lusts of it," all lust of concupiscence, and all "lust of the eye," and all lust of the hand, unclean contracts, are to be rescinded, all lust of the tongue and palate, all surfeiting and drunkenness: for it is impossible to keep the spirit pure, if it be exposed to all the entertainment of enemies. And if Christ forbade the wanton eye, and placed it under the prohibition of adultery, it is certain, whatsoever ministers

to that vice, and invites to it, is within the same restraint; it is the eye, or the hand, or the foot, that is to be cut off. To this commandment fastings and severe abstinences are apt to be reduced, as being the proper abscission of the instruments and temptations of lust, to which Christ invites by the mixed proposition of threatening and reward; for "better it is to go to heaven with but one eye or one foot," that is, with a body half nourished, than with full meals and an active lust to "enter into hell." And in this our blessed Lord is a physician rather than a lawgiver: for abstinence from all impure concubinate, and morose delectations so much as in thought, being the commandment of God, Christ bids us retrench the occasions and insinuations of lust: thus facilitating the duty, not a new severity, but a secnritv and caution of prudence.

39. "Thou shalt not steal." To this precept Christ added nothing; because God had already in the decalogue fortified this precept with a restraint upon the desires. For the tenth commandment forbids all coveting of our neighbour's goods: for the wife there reckoned, and forbidden to be desired from another man, is not a restraint of libidinous appetite, but of the covetous; it being accounted part of wealth to have a numerous family, many wives and many servants; and this also God by the prophet Nathan upbraided to David, as an instance of David's wealth and God's liberality. But yet this commandment Christ adopted into his law, it being prohibited by the natural law, or the law of right reason, commonwealths not being able to subsist without distinction of dominion, nor industry to be encouraged but by propriety, nor families to be maintained but by defence of just rights and truly-purchased possessions. And this prohibition extends to all injustice, whether done by force or fraud; whether it be by ablation, or prevention, or detaining of rights; any thing in which injury

is done directly or obliquely to our neighbour's fortune.

40. "Thou shalt not bear false witness." That is, thou shalt not answer in judgment against thy neighbour falsely: which testimony in the law was given solemnly and by oath, invoking the name of God. "I adjure thee by God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ," said the high priest to the blessed Jesus, that is, "speak upon thy oath;" and then he told them fully, though they made it the pretence of murdering him, and he knew they would do so. Confessing and witnessing truth is giving glory to God: but false witness is high injustice, it is inhumanity and treason against the quietness, or life, or possession of a just person: it is in itself irregular and unreasonable, and therefore is so forbidden to Christians, not only as it is unjust, but as it is false. For a lie in communication and private converse is also forbidden as well as unjust testimony: "let every man speak truth with his neighbour," that is, in private society, and whether a lie be in jest or earnest, when the purpose is to deceive and abuse, though in the smallest instance, it is in that degree criminal as it is injurious. I find not the same affirmed in every deception of our neighbours, wherein no man is injured, and some are benefited: the error of the affirmation being nothing but a natural irregularity, nothing malicious, but very charitable. I find no severity superadded by Christ to this commandment prohibiting such discourse which, without injury to any man, deceives a man into piety or safety. But this is to be extended no farther: in all things else we must be severe in our discourses, and "neither lie in a great matter nor a small, for the custom thereof is not good," saith the son Sirach. I could add concerning this precept, that Christ having left it in that condition he found it in the decalogue, without any charge or alteration of circumstance, we are commanded

to give true testimony in judgment ; which because it was under an oath, there lies upon us no prohibition, but a severity of injunction to swear truth in judgment when we are required. The securing of testimonies was by the sanctity of an oath, and this remains unaltered in Christianity.

11. "Thou shalt not covet." This commandment we find no where repeated in the gospel by our blessed Saviour ; but it is inserted in the repetition of the second table, which St. Paul mentioned to the Romans : for it was so abundantly expressed in the inclosures of other precepts, and the whole design of Christ's doctrine, that it was less needful specially to express that which is every where affixed to many precepts evangelical. Particularly it is inherent in the first beatitude, "blessed are the poor in spirit ;" and it means, that we should not wish our neighbour's goods with a deliberate entertained desire, but that upon the commencement of the motion it be disbanded instantly : for he that does not at the first address and incitement of the passion suppress it, he hath given it that entertainment which in every period of staying is a degree of morose delectation in the appetite. And to this I find not Christ added any thing, for the law itself, forbidding to entertain the desire, hath commanded the instant and present suppression ; they are the same thing, and cannot reasonably be distinguished. Now that Christ in the instance of adultery hath commanded to abstain also from occasions and accesses towards the lust, in this hath not the same severity ; because the vice of covetousness is not such a wildfire as lust is, not inflamed by contact, and neighbourhood of all things in the world : every thing may be instrumental to libidinous desires, but to covetous appetites there are not temptations of so different natures.

12. Concerning the order of these commandments it is not unusefully observed, that, if we

account from the first to the last, they are of greatest perfection which are last described ; and he who is arrived to that severity and dominion of himself as not to desire his neighbour's goods, is very far from actual injury ; and so in proportion ; it being the least degree of religion to confess but one God. But therefore vices are to take their estimate in the contrary order : he that prevaricates the first commandment is the greatest sinner in the world ; and the least is he that only covets without any actual injustice. And there is no variety or objection in this, unless it be altered by the accidental difference of degrees ; but in the kinds of sin the rule is true : this only, the sixth and seventh are otherwise in the Hebrew Bibles than ours, and in the Greek otherwise in Exodus than in Deuteronomy ; and by this rule it is a greater sin to commit adultery than to kill ; concerning which we have no certainty, save that St. Paul in one respect makes the sin of uncleanness the greatest of any sin, whose scene lies in the body ; "every sin is without the body, but he that commits fornication sins against his own body."

THE PRAYER.

O eternal Jesus, wisdom of the Father, thou light of Jews and Gentiles, and the great Master of the world, who by thy holy sermons and clearest revelations of the mysteries of thy Father's kingdom didst invite all the world to great degrees of justice, purity, and sanctity, and instruct us all in a holy institution, give us understanding of thy laws ; that the light of thy celestial doctrine illuminating our darknesses, and making bright all the recesses of our spirits and understandings, we may direct our feet, all the lower man, the affections of the inferior appetite, to walk in the paths of

thy commandments. Dearest God, make us to live a life of religion and justice, of love and duty; that we may adore thy Majesty, and reverence thy name, and love thy mercy, and admire thy infinite glories and perfections, and obey thy precepts. Make us to love thee for thyself, and our neighbours for thee; make us to be all love and all duty: that we may adorn the gospel of thee our Lord, walking worthy of our vocation: that as thou hast called us to be

thy disciples, so we may walk therein, doing the work of faithful servants, and may receive the adoption of sons, and the gift of eternal glory, which thou hast reserved for all the disciples of thy holy institution. Make all the world obey thee as a prophet; that, being redeemed and purified by thee our High Priest, all may reign with thee our King in thy eternal kingdom, O Eternal Jesus, wisdom of thy Father. Amen.

OF THE THREE ADDITIONAL PRECEPTS WHICH CHRIST SUPERINDUCED, AND MADE PARTS OF THE CHRISTIAN LAW.

DISCOURSE XI.

Of Charity, with its parts; Forgiving, Giving, not Judging.

OF FORGIVENESS. PART I.

1. THE Holy Jesus coming to reconcile all the world to God, would reconcile all the parts of the world one with another, that they may rejoice in their common bond and their common salvation. The first instance of charity forbade to Christians all revenge of injuries; which was a perfection and endearment of duty beyond what either most of the old philosophers, or the laws of the nations, or of Moses, ever practised or enjoined. For revenge was esteemed to unhallowed, unchristian natures as sweet as life, a satisfaction of injuries, and the only cure of maladies and affronts. Only, laws of the wisest commonwealths commanded that revenge should be taken by the judge; a few cases being excepted, in which, by sentence of the law, the injured person or his nearest relative might be the executioner of the vengeance: as among the Jews in the case of murder; among the Romans, in the case of an adulteress or a ravished daughter, the father might kill the adulteress or the ravisher. In other things the

judge only was to be the avenger. But Christ commanded his disciples, rather than to take revenge, to expose themselves to a second injury, rather offer the other cheek than be avenged for a blow on this; "for vengeance belongs to God," and he will retaliate: and to "that wrath we must give place," saith St. Paul; that is, in well-doing and evil suffering "commit ourselves to his righteous judgment," leaving room for his execution, who will certainly do it, if we snatch not the sword from his arm.

2. But some observe, that our blessed Saviour instanced but in smaller injuries: He that bade us suffer a blow on the cheek, did not oblige us tamely to be sacrificed; he that enjoined us to put up the loss of our coat and cloak, did not signify his pleasure to be that we should suffer our family to be turned out of doors, and our whole estate alienated and cancelled, especially we being otherwise obliged to provide for them, under the pain of the curse of infidelity. And indeed there is much reason why our defences may be extended, when the injuries are too great for our sufferance, or when our defence brings no greater damage to the other than we divert from ourselves. But our blessed Saviour's prohibition is instanced in such small particulars.

which are no limitations of the general precept, but particulars of common consideration. "But I say unto you, resist not evil:" so our English Testament reads it; but the word signifies "avenge not evil," and it binds us to this only, that we be not avengers of the wrong, but rather suffer twice, than to be avenged once. He that is struck on the face may run away, or may divert the blow, or bind the hand of his enemy; and he whose coat is snatched away may take it again, if without injury to the other he may do it. We are sometimes bound to resist evil: every clearing of our innocence, refuting of calumnies, quitting ourselves of reproach, is a resisting evil: but such which is hallowed to us by the example of our Lord himself and his apostles. But this precept is clearly expounded by St. Paul, "Render not evil for evil," that is, be not revenged: you may either secure or restore yourselves to the condition of your own possessions or fame, or preserve your life, provided that no evil be returned to him that offers the injury. For so sacred are the laws of Christ, so holy and great is his example, so much hath he endeared us who were his enemies, and so frequently and severely hath he preached and enjoined forgiveness; that he who knows not to forgive, knows not to be like a Christian, and a disciple of so gentle a Master.

3. So that the smallness or greatness of the instance alters not the case in this duty: in the greatest matters we are permitted only to an innocent defence, in the smallest we may do so too: I may as well hold my coat fast as my gold, and I may as well hide my goods as run away, and that is a defence; and if my life be in danger, I must do no more but defend myself. Save only that defence in case of life is of a larger signification than in case of goods. I may wound my enemy, if I cannot else be safe; I may disarm him, or in any sense disable him, and this is extended even to a liberty to kill

him,* if my defence necessarily stands upon so hard conditions: for although I must not give him a wound for a wound, because that cannot cure me, but is certainly revenge; yet when my life cannot be otherwise safe than by killing him, I have used that liberty which nature hath permitted me, and Christ hath not forbidden, who only interdicted revenge, and forbade no defence which is charitable and necessary, and not blended with malice and anger. And it is as much charity to preserve myself as him, when I fear to die.

4. But although we find this nowhere forbidden, yet it is very consonant to the excellent mercy of the gospel, and greatly laudable, if we choose rather to lose our life, in imitation of Christ, than save it by the loss of another's in pursuance of the permissions of nature. When nature only gives leave, and no lawgiver gives command to defend our lives, and the excellence of Christianity highly commends dying for our enemies, and propounds to our imitation the greatest example that ever could be in the world: it is a very great imperfection, if we choose not rather to obey a hint of the Holy Jesus, than with greediness and appetite pursue the bare permissions of nature. But in this we have no necessity. Only this is to be read with two cautions. First, So long as the assaulted person is in actual danger, he must use all arts and subterfuges which his wit or danger can supply him with, as passive defence, flight, arts of diversion, entreaties, soft and gentle answers, or whatsoever is in its kind innocent, to prevent his sin and my danger; that when he is forced to his last defence, it may be certain he hath nothing of revenge mingled in so sad a remedy. Secondly, That this be not understood to be a permission to defend our lives against an angry and unjust prince: for if my lawful

* By whom is this liberty granted? Taylor quotes *Seneca*, not Christ. Christianity gives no permission to kill even in self-defence.—Ed.

prince should attempt my life with rage, or with the abused solemnities of the law ; in the first case the sacredness of his person, in the second, the reverence and religion of authority, are his defensatives, and immure him, and bind my hands, that I must not lift them up, but to heaven, for my own defence and his pardon.

5. But the vain pretences of vainer persons have here made a question where there is no scruple ; " and if I may defend my life with the sword, or with any thing which nature and the laws forbid not, why not also mine honour, which is as dear as life, which makes my life without contempt, useful to my friend, and comfortable to myself ? for to be reputed a coward, a baffled person, and one that will take affronts, is to be miserable and scorned, and to invite all insolent persons to do me injuries. May I not be permitted to fight for mine honour, and to wipe off the stains of my reputation ? honour is as dear as life, and sometimes dearer." To this I have many things to say. For that which men in this question call honour is nothing but a reputation amongst persons vain, unchristian in their deportment, empty and ignorant souls, who count that the standard of honour which is the instrument of reprobation ; as if to be a gentleman were to be no Christian. They that have built their reputation upon such societies must take new estimates of it, according as the wine, or fancy, or custom, or some great fighting person shall determine it ; and whatsoever invites a quarrel is a rule of honour. But then it is a sad consideration to remember, that it is accounted honour not to recede from any thing we have said or done : it is honour not to take the lie, in the mean time it is not dishonourable to lie indeed, but to be told so ; and not to kill him that says it, and venture my life and his too, that is a forfeiture of reputation. A mistress's favour, an idle discourse, a jest, a jealousy, a health, a gaiety, any thing must engage two lives in hazard, and two souls in

ruin ; or else they are dishonoured. As if a life, which is so dear to a man's self, which ought to be dear to others, which all laws and wise princes and states have secured by the circumvallation of laws and penalties, which nothing but heaven can recompense for the loss of, which is the breath of God, which to preserve Christ died, the son of God died, as if this were so contemptible a thing, that it must be ventured for satisfaction of a vicious person, or a vain custom, or such a folly which a wise and a severe person had rather die than be guilty of. Honour is from him that honours : now certainly God and the king are the fountains of honour ; right reason and religion, the scripture and the laws, are the best rules of estimating honour ; and if we offer to account our honours by the senseless and illiterate discourses of vain and vicious persons, our honour can be no greater than the fountain from whence it is derivative ; and at this rate Harpasse, Seneca's wife's fool, might have declared Thersites an honourable person, and every bold gladiator in a Roman theatre, or a fighting rebel among the slaves of Sparta, or a trooper of Sparticus's guard, might have stood upon their honour upon equal and as fair a challenge. Certainly there is no greater honour than to be like the Holy Jesus ; for he is delectable in the eyes of God, and so are all his relatives and followers, by participation of his honour ; and nothing can be more honourable than to do wise and excellent actions, according to the account of divine and human laws : and if either God or the king can derive honour upon their subjects, then whatsoever is contrary to that which they honour must needs be base, dishonourable and inglorious.

6. But if we be troubled for fear of new and succeeding injuries, and will needs fight, and as much as lies in us kill our brother to prevent an injury, nothing can be more unworthy of a Christian, nothing can be more inhuman. Cato, pleading in the Roman senate in the behalf of

the Rhodian ambassadors, who came to beg peace of the commonwealth, which had entertained an anger and some thoughts of war against them, upon pretence that the Rhodians would war with them when they durst, discoursed severely and prudently against such unreasonable purposes. And the life of men and the interest of states is not like the trade of fencers, whose lot is to conquer if they strike first, to die if they be prevented: man's life is not established upon so unequal and unreasonable necessities, that either we must first do an injury, or else it is certain we must receive a mischief. God's providence and care in his government of the world is more vigilant and merciful, and he protects persons innocent and just in all cases, except when he means to make an injury the instrument of a grace, or a violent death to be the gate of glory. It was not ill answered of Merope to king Polyphontes, who therefore killed his brother, because he had entertained a purpose to have killed him; "You should only have done the same injury to him which he did to you; you should still have had a purpose to kill him:" for his injustice went no farther; and it is hard to requite ill and uncertain purposes with actual murder, especially when we are as much secured by the power of laws, as the whole commonwealth is in all its greatest interests. And therefore for Christians to kill a man to prevent being baffled or despised, is to use an extremely desperate remedy, infinitely painful and deadly, to prevent a little griping in the belly foreseen as possible to happen it may be three years after. But besides, this objection supposes a disease almost as earnestly to be cured as this of the main question; for it represents a man keeping company with lewd and debauched persons, spending his time in vanity, drunken societies, or engaged in lust, or placing his scene amongst persons apt to do affronts or unworthy misdemeanors; and indeed an affront, an injury, a blow, or a loud disgrace,

is not the consequent of not fighting, but a punishment for engaging in loose, baser, and vicious company. If the gallants of the age would find an honest and a noble employment, or would be delicate in the choice of their friends and company, or would be severe in taking accounts of themselves and of their time, would live as becomes persons wise and innocent, that is, like Christians, they would soon perceive themselves removed far from injuries, and yet farther from trouble, when such levities of mischance or folly should intervene. But suppose a man affronted or disgraced, it is considerable whether the man *deserved* it or no. If he did, let him entertain it for his punishment, and use it for an instrument of correction and humility: if he did not, as an instance of fortitude and despite of lower things. But to venture lives to abolish a past act is madness, unless in both those lives there was not good enough to be esteemed greater and of better value than the light affront had in it of misery and trouble. Certainly those persons are very unfortunate, in whose lives much more pleasure is not than there is mischief in a light blow, or a lighter affront, from a vain or an angry person. But suppose there were not, yet how can fighting or killing my adversary wipe off my aspersion, or take off my blow, or prove that I did not lie? for it is but an ill argument to say, "If I dare kill him, then I did not lie: or if I dare fight, then he struck me not; or if I dare venture damnation, then I am an honourable person." And yet farther, "Who gave me power over my own life, or over the life of another, that I shall venture my own, and offer to take his? God and God's vicegerent only are the Lords of lives; who made us judges, and princes, or gods? and if we be not such, we are murderers and villains." When Moses would have parted the duelists that fought in Egypt, the injurious person asked him, Who made thee a judge or ruler over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst

the Egyptian yesterday! meaning, he had no power to kill, none to judge of life and death, unless he had been made a ruler. "Yea, but flesh and blood cannot endure a blow or a disgrace." Grant that too, but take this into the account, "flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And yet besides this, those persons have but a tender stock of reason and wisdom and patience who have not discourse enough to make them bear an injury, which the philosophy of the Gentiles, without the light of Christianity, taught them to tolerate with so much equanimity and dispassionate entertainment. That person is not a man who knows not how to suffer the inconvenience of an accident and indiscretion of light persons; or if he could not, yet certainly that is a mad impatience when a man, to remedy the pain of a drop of scalding water, shall drench himself in the liquid flames of pitch and a bituminous bath.

7. Truth is, to fight a duel is a thing that all kingdoms are bound to restrain with highest severity; it is a consociation of many the worst acts that a person ordinarily can be guilty of; it is want of charity, of justice, of humility, of trust in God's providence; it is therefore pride, and murder, and injustice, and infinite unreasonableness, and nothing of a Christian, nothing of excuse, nothing of honour in it, if God and wise men be admitted judges of the lists. And it would be considered, that every one that fights a duel must reckon himself as dead or dying, (for however any man flatters himself by saying he will not kill, if he could avoid it; yet rather than be killed he will, and to the danger of being killed his own act exposes him:) now is it a good posture for a man to die with a sword in his hand, thrust at his brother's breast, with a purpose either explicit or implicit to have killed him? Can a man die twice, that in case he miscarries and is damned for the first ill dying, he may mend his fault and die better

the next time? Can his vain, imaginary and phantastic shadow of reputation make him recompense for the disgrace and confusion of face, and pains and horrors of eternity? Is there no such thing as forgiving injuries, nothing of the discipline of Jesus in our spirits? are we called by the name of Christ, and have nothing in us but the spirit of Cain, and Nimrod, and Joab? If neither reason nor religion can rule us, neither interest nor safety can determine us, neither life nor eternity can move us, neither God nor wise men be sufficient judges of honour to us: then our damnation is just, but it is heavy: our fall is certain, but it is cheap, base, and inglorious. And let not the vanities or the gallants of the world slight this friendly monition, rejecting it with a scorn, because it is talking like a divine: it were no disparagement if they would do so too, and believe accordingly: and they would find a better return of honour in the crowns of eternity by talking like a divine, than by dying like a fool; by living in imitation and obedience to the laws of the Holy Jesus, than by perishing, or committing murder, or by attempting it, or by venturing it, like a weak, impotent, passionate and brutish person. Upon this chapter it is sometimes asked, whether a virgin may not kill a ravisher to defend her chastity. Concerning which as we have no special and distinct warrant, so there is in reason and analogy of the gospel much for the negative. For since his act alone cannot make her criminal, and is no more than a wound in my body, or a civil or a natural inconvenience, it is unequal to take a life in exchange for a lesser injury, and it is worse that I take it myself. Some great examples we find in story, and their names are remembered in honour: but we can make no judgment of them, but that their zeal was reprobable for its intemperance, though it had excellency in the matter of the passion.

8. But if we may not secure our honour, or

be revenged for injuries by the sword, may we not crave the justice of the law, and implore the vengeance of the judge, who is appointed "for vengeance against evil doers?" and the judge being the king's officer, and the king God's vicergerent, it is no more than imploring God's hand; and that is "giving place to wrath," which St. Paul speaks of, that is, permitting all to the divine justice. To this I answer, that it is not lawful to go to law for every occasion or slighter injury, because it is very distant from the mercies, forgiveness and gentleness of a Christian, to contest for trifles; and it is certain that the injuries, or evil, or charges of trouble and expense, will be more vexatious and afflictive to the person contested, than a small instance of wrong is to the person injured. And it is a great intemperance of anger and impotence of spirit, a covetousness and impatience, to appeal to the judge for determination concerning a lock of camel's hair or a goat's beard: I mean any thing that is less than the gravity of laws or the solemnity of a court, and that does not outweigh the inconveniences of a suit. But this we are to consider in the expression of our blessed Saviour, "If a man will sue thee at the law, and take thy cloak, let him have thy coat also." Which words are a particular instance in pursuit of the general precept, "resist not, or avenge not, evil." The primitive Christians (as it happens in the first fervours of a discipline) were sometimes severe in observation of the letter, not subtly distinguishing counsels from precepts, but swallowing all the words of Christ without chewing or discrimination. They abstained from tribunals, unless they were forced thither by persecutors; but went not thither to regain their goods. And if we consider suits of law as they are wrapped in circumstances of action and practice, with how many subtleties and arts they are managed, how pleadings are made mercenary, and that it will be hard to find right counsel that shall advise

you to desist if your cause be wrong, (and therefore there is great reason to distrust every question, since, if it be never so wrong, we shall meet advocates to encourage us and plead for it) what danger of miscarriages, of uncharitableness, anger and animosities, what desires to prevail, what care and fearfulness of the event, what innumerable temptations do intervene, how many sins are secretly insinuated in our hearts and actions, if a suit were of itself ever so lawful, it would concern the duty of a Christian to avoid it, as he prays against temptations, and cuts off the opportunities of a sin. It is not lawful for a Christian to sue his brother at the law, unless he can be patient if he loses, and charitable if he be wronged, and can prosecute his end without any mixture of covetousness, or desires to prevail without envy, or can believe himself wrong when his judge says he is, or can submit to peace when his just cause is oppressed, and rejected, and condemned, and without pain or regret can sit down by the loss of his right, and of his pains, and his money. And if he can do all this, what need he go to law? he may with less trouble and less danger take the loss singly, and expect God's providence for reparation, than disentitle himself to that by his own frowardness, and take the loss when it comes laden with many circumstances of trouble.

9. But however by accident it may become unlawful to go to law in a just cause, or in any, yet by this precept we are not forbidden To go to law for revenge we are simply forbidden, that is, to return evil for evil; and therefore all those suits which are for vindictive sentences, not for the reparative, are directly criminal. To follow a thief to death for spoiling my goods is extremely unreasonable and uncharitable; for as there is no proportion between my *goods* and his *life*, (and therefore I demand it to his evil and injury) so the putting him to death repairs not my estate: the first makes it in me

to be unjust, the latter declares me malicious and revengeful. If I demand an eye for an eye, his eye extinguished will not enlighten mine; and therefore to prosecute him to such purposes is to resist or render evil with evil, directly against Christ's sermon. But if the postulation of sentence be in order only to restore myself, we find it permitted by St. Paul, who, when for the scandal sake he forbade "going to law before unbelievers," and for the danger and temptation's sake, and the latent irregularity which is certainly appendant to ordinary litigations, he is angry indefinitely with them that go to law; yet he adviseth that Christian arbitrators be appointed for decision of emergent questions. And therefore when the supreme authority hath appointed and regularly established an arbitrator, the permission is the same. St. Paul is angry that among Christians there should be suits, but it is therefore he is chiefly angry because Christians do wrong; they who should rather suffer wrong, yet that they should do it, and defraud their brother, which in some sense enforces suits, that is it he highly blames. But when injustice is done, and a man is in a considerable degree defrauded, then it is permitted to him to repeat his own before Christian arbitrators, whether chosen by private consent or public authority; for that circumstance makes no essential alteration in the question: but then this must be done with as much simplicity and unmingled design as is possible, without any desire of rendering evil to the person of the offender, without arts of heightening the charge, without prolongation, devices, and arts of vexation, without anger and animosities; and then although accidentally there is some appendent charge to the offending person, that is not accounted upon the stock of revenge, because it was not designed, and is not desired, and is cared for to prevent it as much as may be, and therefore offer was made of private and unchargeable arbitrators; and this being refused,

the charge and accidental evil, if it be less than the loss of my sufferance and injury, must be reckoned to the necessities of affairs, and put upon the stock of his injustice, and will not affix a guilt upon the actor. I say, this is true, when the actor hath used all means to accord it without charge, and when he is refused manages it with as little as he can, and when it is nothing of his desire, but something of his trouble, that he cannot have his own without the lesser accidental evil to the offender, and that the question is great and weighty in his proportion: then a suit of law is of itself lawful. But then let it be remembered how many ways afterwards it may become unlawful, and I have no more to add in this article but the saying of the son of Sirach, "he that loves danger shall perish in it." And certainly he had need be an angel that manages a suit innocently; and he that hath so excellent a spirit as with innocence to run through the infinite temptations of a law-suit, in all probability hath so much holiness as to suffer the injury, and so much prudence as to avoid the danger: and therefore nothing but a very great defalcation or ruin of a man's estate will from the beginning to the end justify such a controversy. When a man is put to it so, that he cannot do some other duty without venturing in this, then the grace of God is sufficient for him; but he that enters lightly shall walk dangerously, and a thousand to one but he will fall foully. "It is utterly a fault among you," said St. Paul, "because ye go to law one with another." It is not always a crime, but ever a fault and an irregularity, a recession from Christian perfection, and an entertaining of a danger, which though we escape through, yet it was a fault to have entered into it, when we might have avoided it. And even then when it is lawful for us, it is not expedient. For so the apostle sums up his reprehension concerning Christians going to law, we must "rather take wrong, rather suffer ourselves to be defrauded;

and when we cannot bear the burthen of the loss, then indeed we are permitted to appeal to Christian judges; but then there are so many cautions to be observed, that it may be the remedy is worse than the disease. I only observe this one thing, that St. Paul permits it only in the instance of defraudation or matter of interest; such as are defending of widows and orphans and churches, which in estimation of law are by way of fiction reckoned to be in pupillage and minority; add also repeating our own interests, when our necessities, or the support of our family and relatives, requires it: for all these are cases of charity or duty respectively. But besides the matter of defraudation, we find no instance expressed, nor any equality and parallel of reason to permit Christians in any case to go to law; because in other things the sentence is but vindictive, and cannot repair us; and therefore demanding justice is a rendering evil in the proper matter of revenge. Concerning which I know no scruple but in an action of scandal and ill report. But because an innocent and an holy light will force light out of darkness, and humility, and patience, and waiting upon God will bring glory out of shame; I suppose he who goes to law to regain his credit attempts the cure by incompetent remedies: if the accusation be public, the law will call him to an account, and then he is upon his defence, and must acquit himself with meekness and sincerity; but this allows not him to be the actor, for then it is rather a design of revenge than a proper deleteric of his disgrace, and purgative of the calumny. For if the accusation can be proved, it was no calumny; if it be not proved, the person is not always innocent, and to have been accused leaves something foul in his reputation; and therefore he that by law makes it more public, propagates his own disgrace, and sends his shame farther than his innocence, and the crime will go whither his absolution shall not arrive.

10. If it be yet farther questioned, whether it be lawful to pray for a revenge or a punishment upon the offender, (I reckon them all one; he that prays for punishment of him that did him personal injury cannot easily be supposed to separate the punishment from his own revenge,) I answer, that although God be the avenger of all our wrongs, yet it were fit for us to have the affections of brethren, not the designs and purposes of a judge, but leave them to him to whom they are proper. When in the bitterness of soul an oppressed person curses sadly, and prays for vengeance, the calamity of the man and the violence of his enemy hasten a curse, and ascertain it. But whatever excuses the greatness of the oppression may make I know not; but the bitterness of the spirit, besides that it is pitiable as it is a passion, yet it is violent and less Christian as it is active and sends forth prayers. Woe is pronounced to them by whom the offence cometh; yet we must beware of offences, because by them we are engaged in a sin: and he that prays for a revenge hath a revengeful spirit, however it be restrained by laws and exterior tendernesses from acting such dire purposes. And he that prays for revenge may indeed procure a justice to be done upon the injurious person; but oftentimes it happens then to fall on him when we least wish it, when we also have a conjunct interest in the other's preservation and escape: God so punishing the first wrong, that we also may smart for our uncharitable wishes. For the ground of all this discourse is, that it is part of Christian charity to forgive injuries: which forgiveness of the injury, although it may reasonably enough stand with my fair and innocent requiring of my own, which goes no farther than a fair repetition: yet in no case can it stand with the acting and desiring revenge, which also in the formality of revenge can have no pretence of charity, because it is ineffective to my restitution. This discourse concerns private persons;

whether it concern the question of war, and how far, is not proper for this consideration.

OF ALMS. PART II.

1. **BUT** Christian charity hath its effect also in benefits as well as gentleness and innocence: Give to him that asketh, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. But when thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. These are the precepts of the Lord, for the substance and the manner of alms, for the quantity and freeness of the donative, and the simplicity of him that gives; to which add those other words of his, "sell your possession and give alms." This precept with its circumstances was intended as a defensative against covetousness and prodigality, and a suppletory to make up the wants, and to make even the breaches of mankind: in which we shall best understand our obligation, if we consider in what proportion we must give alms, and to what persons, and in what manner.

2. First, For the quantity, we shall best take an estimate of it, if we remember the portion which God allows to Christians, "Having food and raiment, let us be content with it: and our blessed Saviour at the latter end of this sermon stirs up to confidence in God, and not to doubt our provisions, by telling that God "feeds the ravens, and clothes the lilies, and he will much rather do it to us," he will clothe us and feed us; no more is in the promise, no more is in our need: and therefore whatsoever is beside our needs natural and personal, that is, proportioning our needs to the condition of our life, and exigence of our calling, and quality of our person, all that can be spared from what we modestly and temperately spend in our support, and the supply of our families, and other necessary incidents, all that is to be spent in charity or religion. He defrauds the poor of their right

who detains from them beyond his own necessary, prudent, and convenient supplies, saith St. Hierome: and this is intended to be a retrenchment of all vain expenses, costly feasts, rich clothes, pompous retinue, and such excrescences of expense which of themselves serve no end of piety or just policy, but by wise and temperate persons are esteemed unnecessary, and without which the dignity and just value of the person may still be retained. Whatsoever is vainly spent, was the portion of the poor; whatsoever we lose in idle gaming, revelling, and wantonness of prodigality, was designed by Christ to refresh his own bowels, to fill the bellies of the poor; whatsoever lies in our repository useless and superfluous, all that is the poor man's inheritance: and certainly there is not any greater baseness than to suffer a man to perish or be in extreme want of that which God gave me for him, and beyond my own needs. It is unthankfulness to God, it is unmercifulness to the poor, it is improvidence to ourselves, it is unfaithfulness in the dispensation of the money of which God made him but the steward, and his chest the bank for the exchange and issuing it to the indigent. And he that is unmerciful and unjust is extremely unlike God. But in taking this estimate concerning our excrescences we are to proceed according to the rules of prudence, not making determinations in grains and scruples, but in the greater actions and accountable proportions of our estates. And if any man seeing great necessities of indigent and calamitous persons shall give beyond his ability, he had the Philippians for his precedent, and he hath God engaged for his payment, and a greater share in heaven for his reward. Only this; as we are to provide for ourselves, so also for our family and the relatives of our charge and nearer endearments, not only with a provision of the present day's entertainment, but also for all nearer, probable, foreseen and expected events, such as are portions for our chil-

dren, dowries for daughters: but this must not be extended to care and reservations for all possible and far distant events; but so much is to be permitted to the divine providence as our present duty gives leave. In which although a prudent guide and a sober reason are to make application to practice, yet the rule in general is, that by so much we are to relieve the poor, as we can deduct from such a portion of good things as God permits us to use for our own support, and reasonable and temporal conveniences of our person and condition; ever remembering, that if we increase in our estate we also should increase in charity, that in this also may be verified what is written, "He that had much had nothing over, and he that had little had no lack." There is in the quantity of these donatives some latitude; but if we sow sparingly, or if we scatter plentifully, so we shall reap: only we must be careful that no extreme necessity or biting want lies upon any poor man, whom we can relieve without bringing such a want upon ourselves which is less than the permissions of fortune, which the mercies of God have permitted to us, that is, food and raiment proper for us. Under food and raiment all the necessities of life are to be understood: whatsoever is more than this is counsel and perfection; for which a proportionable reward is deposited in the treasures of eternity.

3. Secondly, If question be made concerning the persons who are to be the object of our alms, our rule is plain and easy; for nothing is required in the person suscipient and capable of alms, but that he be in misery and want, and unable to relieve himself. This last clause I insert in pursuance of that caution given to the church of Thessalonica by St. Paul, "If any one will not work, neither let him eat;" for we must be careful that our charity, which is intended to minister to poor men's needs, do not minister to idleness and the love of beggary, and a wandering, useless, unprofitable life.

But, abating this, there is no other consideration that can exempt any needy person from participation of your charity; not, though he be your enemy; (for that is it which our blessed Saviour means in the appendix of this precept "Love your enemies," that is, according to the exposition of the Apostle, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink") not, though he be an unbeliever; not, though he be a vicious person: provided only that the vice be such to which your relief ministers no fuel and adds no flame; and if the mere necessities of his nature be supplied, it will be a fair security against the danger; but if the vice be in the scene of the body, all free comforts are to be denied him, because they are but incentives of sin and angels of darkness. This I the rather insert, that the pride and supercilious austerities of some persons, become not to them an instrument of excuse from ministering to needy persons, upon pretence their own sins brought them into that condition. For though the causes of our calamities are many times great secrets of providence, yet suppose the poverty of the man was the effect of his prodigality or other baseness, it matters not as to our duty how he came into it, but where he is; lest we also be denied a visit in our sicknesses, and a comfort in our sorrow, or a counsel in our doubts, or aid in any distress, upon pretence that such sadness was procured by our sins: and ten to one but it was so. "Do good to all," saith the Apostle, "but especially to the family of faith;" for to them our charity is most proper and proportioned: to all, viz. who are in need, and cannot relieve themselves; in which number persons that can work are not to be accounted. So that if it be necessary to observe an order in our charity, that is, when we cannot supply and suffice for all our opportunities of mercy, then "Let not the brethren of our Lord go away ashamed;" and in other things observe the order and

propriety of your own relations, and where there is otherwise no difference, the degree of the necessity is first to be considered. This also, if the necessity be final and extreme, whatever the man be, he is first to be relieved before the lesser necessities of the best persons or most holy poor. But the proper objects of our charity are old persons, sick or impotent, laborious and poor housekeepers, widows and orphans, people oppressed or persecuted for the cause of righteousness, distressed strangers, captives and abused slaves, prisoners of debt. To these we must be liberal, whether they be holy or unholy, remembering that we are sons of that Father who makes the dew of heaven to drop upon the dwellings of the righteous and the fields of sinners.

1. Thirdly, the manner of giving alms is an office of Christian prudence; for in what instances we are to exemplify our charity we must be determined by our own powers, and other's needs. The Scripture reckons entertaining strangers, visiting the sick, going to prisons, feeding and clothing the hungry and naked; to which, by the exigence of the poor and the analogy of charity, many others are to be added. The Holy Jesus in the very precept, instanced in lending money to them that need to borrow; and he adds, looking for nothing again, that is, if they be unable to pay it. Forgiving debts is a great instance of mercy, and a particular of excellent relief: but to imprison men for debt, when it is certain they are not able to pay it, and by that prison will be far more disabled, is an uncharitableness next to the cruelties of savages, and at infinite distance from the mercies of the Holy Jesus.

brother;) and this is a charity so cheap and so reasonable, that it requires nothing of us but silence in our spirits. We may perform this duty at the charge of a negative; if we meddle not with other men's affairs, we shall do them no wrong, and purchase to ourselves a peace, and be secured the rather from the unerring sentence of a severer Judge. But this interdict forbids only such judging as is ungentle and uncharitable: in criminal causes let us find all the ways to alleviate the burden of the man by just excuses, by extenuating or lessening accidents, by abatement of incident circumstances, by gentle sentences, and whatsoever can do relief to the person, that his spirit be not exasperated, that the crime be not the parent of impudence, that he be not insulted on, that he be invited to repentance, and by such sweetnesses he be led to his restitution. This also in questions of doubts obliges us to determine to the more favourable sense: and we also do need the same mercies, and therefore should do well by our own rigour not to disentitle ourselves to such possibilities and reserves of charity. But it is foul and base, by detraction and iniquity, to blast the reputation of an honourable action, and the fair name of virtue with a calumny. But this duty is also a part of the grace of justice and of humility, and by its relation and kindred to so many virtues is furnished with so many arguments of amiability and endearment.

THE PRAYER.

Holy and merciful Jesus, who art the great principle and the instrument of conveying to us the charity and mercies of eternity, who didst love us when we were enemies, forgive us when we were debtors, recover us when we were dead, ransom us when we were slaves, relieve us when we were poor, and naked, and wandering,

OF NOT JUDGING. PART III.

ANOTHER instance of charity our great Master inserted in this sermon, (not to judge our

and full of sadness and necessities ; give us the grace of charity, that we may be pitiful and compassionate of the needs of our necessitous brethren, that we may be apt to relieve them, and that according to our duty and possibilities we may rescue them from their calamities. Give us courteous, affable and liberal souls ; let us by thy example forgive our debtors, and love our enemies, and do to them offices of civility, and tenderness, and relief ; always propounding thee for our pattern, and thy mercies for our precedent, and thy precepts for a rule, and thy Spirit for our guide : that we shewing mercy here, may receive the mercies of eternity by thy merits, and by thy charities, and dispensation, O Holy and merciful Jesus. Amen.

DISCOURSE XII.

Of the Second Additional Precept of Christ.

OF PRAYER.

1. THE soul of a Christian is the house of God, "Ye are God's building," (saith St. Paul,) but the house of God is the house of prayer : and therefore prayer is the work of the soul, whose organs are intended for instruments of the divine praises ; and when every stop and pause of those instruments is but the conclusion of a collect, and every breathing is a prayer, then the body becomes a temple, and the soul is the sanctuary, and more private recess, and place of intercourse. Prayer is the great duty, and the greatest privilege of a Christian ; it is his intercourse with God, his sanctuary in troubles, his remedy for sins, his cure of griefs, and, as St. Gregory calls it, "it is the principal instrument whereby we minister to God in execution of the decrees of eternal predestination ;" and those things which God intends for us, we bring to ourselves by the mediation of holy prayers. Prayer is the "ascent of the

mind to God, and a petitioning for such things as we need for our support and duty." It is an abstract and summary of Christian religion. Prayer is an act of religion and divine worship, confessing his power and his mercy ; it celebrates his attributes, and confesses his glories, and reveres his person, and implores his aid, and gives thanks for his blessings : it is an act of humility and dependence, expressed in the prostration of our bodies and humiliation of our spirits : it is an act of charity when we pray for others ; it is an act of repentance when it confesses and begs pardon for our sins, and exercises every grace according to the design of the man, and the matter of the prayer. So that there will be less need to amass arguments to invite us to this duty ; every part is an excellence, and every end of it is a blessing, and every design is a motive, and every need is an impulse to this holy office. Let us but remember how many needs we have, at how cheap a rate we may obtain their remedies, and yet how honourable the employment is to go to God with confidence, and to fetch our supplies with easiness and joy ; and then, without farther preface, we may address ourselves to the understanding of that duty by which we imitate the employment of angels and beatified spirits, by which we ascend to God in spirit while we remain on earth, and God descends on earth while he yet resides in heaven, sitting there on the throne of his kingdom.

2. Our first inquiry must be concerning the matter of our prayers ; for our desires are not to be the rule of prayers, unless reason and religion be the rule of our desires. The old heathens prayed to their gods for such things as they were ashamed to name publicly before men ; and these were their private prayers, which they dare not for their indecency or iniquity make public. And indeed sometimes the best men ask of God things not unlawful in themselves, yet very hurtful to them : and therefore, as by the Spirit

of God and right reason we are taught in general what is lawful to be asked; so it is still to be submitted to God, when we have asked lawful things, to grant to us in kindness, or to deny us in mercy: after all the rules that can be given us, we not being able in many instances to judge for ourselves, unless also we could certainly pronounce concerning future contingencies. But the Holy Ghost being now sent upon the church, and the rule of Christ being left to his church, together with his form of prayer taught and prescribed to his disciples, we have sufficient instruction for the matter of our prayers, so far as concerns the lawfulness or unlawfulness. And the rule is easy and of no variety. First, for we are bound to pray for all things that concern our duty, all that we are bound to labour for; such as glory and grace, necessary assistances of the Spirit, and rewards spiritual, heaven and heavenly things. Secondly, concerning those things which we may with safety hope for, but are not matter of duty to us, we may lawfully testify our hope and express our desires by petition: but if in their particulars they are under no express promise, but only conveniences of our life and person, it is only lawful to pray for them under condition, that they may conform to God's will and our duty, as they are good and placed in the best order of eternity. Therefore for spiritual blessings let our prayers be particularly importunate, perpetual, and persevering: for temporal blessings let them be generally short, conditional, and modest; and whatsoever things are of a mixed nature, more spiritual than riches, and less necessary than graces, such as gifts and exterior aids, we may pray for them as we may desire them, and as we may expect them; that is, with more confidence and less restraint than in the matter of temporal requests, but with more reservedness and less boldness of petition than when we pray for the graces of sanctification. In the first case we are bound

to pray; in the second, it is only lawful under certain conditions: in the third, it becomes to us as an act of zeal, nobleness, and Christian prudence. But the matter of our prayers is best taught us in the form our Lord taught his disciples; which because it is short, mysterious, and, like the treasures of the Spirit, full of wisdom and latent senses, it is not improper to draw forth those excellences which are intended and signified by every petition, that by so excellent an authority we may know what it is lawful to beg of God.

3. "Our Father which art in heaven." The address reminds us of many parts of our duty. If God be our Father, where is his fear, and reverence, and obedience? "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham;" and, "Ye are of your father the devil, for his works ye do." Let us not dare to call him Father, if we be rebels and enemies; but if we be obedient, then we know he is our Father, and will give us a child's portion, and the inheritance of sons. But it is observable, that Christ here speaking concerning private prayer, does describe it in a form of *plural* signification; to tell us, that we are to draw into the communication of our prayers all those who are confederated in the common relation of sons to the same Father. "Which art in heaven," tells us where our hopes and our hearts must be fixed, whither our desires and our prayers must tend. *Sorsum corda*: "Where our treasure is, there must our hearts be also."

1. "Hallowed be thy name." That is, Let thy name, thy essence, and glorious attributes, be honoured and adored in all the world, believed by faith, loved by charity, celebrated with praises, thanked with eucharist; and let thy name be hallowed in us, as it is in itself. Thy name being called upon us, let us walk worthy of that calling; that "Our light may shine before men, that they seeing our good

works may glorify thee our Father which art in heaven." In order also to the sanctification of thy name, grant that all our praises, hymns, eucharistical remembrances, and representations of thy glories may be useful, blessed, and effectual for dispersing thy fame, and advancing thy honour over all the world. This is a direct and formal act of worshipping and adoration. The name of God is a representative of God himself, and it signifies, be thou worshipped and adored, be thou thanked and celebrated with honour and eucharist.

5. "Thy kingdom come." That is, as thou hast caused to be preached and published the coming of thy kingdom, the peace and truth, the revelation and glories of the gospel; so let it come verily and effectually to us and all the world; that thou mayest truly reign in our spirits, exercising absolute dominion, subduing all thine enemies, ruling in our faculties, in the understanding by faith, in the will by charity, in the passions by mortification, in the members by purity. And as it was more particularly and in the letter proper, at the beginning of Christ's preaching, when he also taught the prayer, that God would hasten the coming of the gospel to all the world; so now also and ever it will be in its proportion necessary and pious to pray that it may come still, making greater progress in the world, extending itself where yet it is not, and intending it where it is already; that the kingdom of Christ may not only be in us in name, and form, and honourable appellatives, but in effect and power. This petition in the first ages of Christianity was not expounded to signify a prayer for Christ's second coming; because the gospel not being preached to all the world, they prayed for the delay of the day of judgment, that Christ's kingdom upon earth might have its proper increment: but since then, every age, as it is more forward in time, so it is more earnest in desire, to accomplish the intermedial pro-

phesies, that the kingdom of God the Father might come in glories infinite. And, indeed, the kingdom of grace being in order to the kingdom of glory, this, as it is principally to be desired, so may possibly be intended chiefly: which also is the more probable, because the address of this prayer being to God the Father, it is proper to observe, that the kingdom of grace, or of the gospel, is called the kingdom of the Son, and that of glory in the style of the Scripture, is the kingdom of the Father. St. German, patriarch of Constantinople, expounds it with some little difference, but not ill: "thy kingdom come," that is, let thy Holy Spirit come into us; for "the kingdom of heaven is within us," saith the Holy Scripture: and so it intimates our desires that the promise of the Father, and the prophecies of old, and the Holy Ghost the Comforter, may come upon us: let that "anointing from above" descend upon us, whereby we may be anointed kings and priests in a spiritual kingdom and priesthood by a holy *chrism*.*

6. "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." That is, the whole economy and dispensation of thy providence be the guide of the world, and the measure of our desire; that we be patient in all accidents, conformable to God's will both in doing and in suffering, submitting to changes, and even to persecutions, and doing all God's will, which because without God's aid we cannot do, therefore we beg it of him by prayer; but by his aid we are confident we may do it in the manner of angelical obedience, that is, promptly, readily, cheerfully, and with all our faculties. Or thus: as the angels in heaven serve thee with harmony, concord, and peace; so let us all join in the service of thy

* It is not nations only, that are

"*Slowly wise and meanly just*;"

men who are the glory of nations, are sadly the creatures of circumstances. TAYLOR would not have written thus tamely on the spread of the gospel, had there been Missionary Societies in his day.—ED.

Majesty with peace and purity, and love unfeigned: that as all the angels are in peace, and amongst them there is no persecutor and none persecuted, there is none afflicting or afflicted, none assaulting or assaulted, but all in sweetness and peaceable serenity glorifying thee; so let thy will be done on earth by all the world in peace and unity, in charity and tranquillity, that with one heart and one voice we may glorify thee our universal Father, having in us nothing that may displease thee, having quitted all our own desires and pretensions, living in angelic conformity, our souls subject to thee, and our passions to our souls; that in earth also thy will may be done as in the spirit and soul, which is a portion of the heavenly substance. These three petitions are addressed to God by way of adoration. In the first the soul puts on the affections of a child, and divests itself of its own interest, offering itself up wholly to the designs and glorifications of God. In the second it puts on the relation and duty of a subject to her legitimate prince, seeking the promotion of its regal interest. In the third she puts on the affection of a spouse, loving the same love, and choosing the same object, and delighting in unions and conformities.* The next part descends lower, and makes addresses to God in relation to our own necessities.

7. "Give us this day our daily bread." That is, give unto us all that is necessary for the support of our lives, the bread of our necessity, so the Syriac interpreter reads it; "this day give us the portion of bread which is day by day necessary." Give us the bread or support which we shall need all our lives; only this day minister our present part. For we pray for the necessary bread or maintenance,

which God knows we shall need all our days; but that we "be not careful for tomorrow," we are taught to pray, not that it be all at once represented or deposited, but that God would minister it as we need it, how he pleases: but our needs are to be the measure of our desires, our desires must not make our needs; that we may be confident of the divine providence, and not at all covetous: for therefore God feeds his people with extemporary provisions, that by needing always they may learn to pray to him, and by being still supplied may learn to trust him for the future, and thank him for that is past, and rejoice in the present. So God rained down manna, giving them their daily portion; and so all fathers and masters minister to their children and servants, giving them their proportion as they eat it, not the meat of a year at once: and yet no child or servant fears want, if his parent or lord be good, and wise, and rich. And it is necessary for all to pray this prayer: the poor, because they want the bread, and have it not deposited but in the hands of God; "mercy ploughing the fields of heaven" (as Job's expression is) brings them corn; and "the cattle upon a thousand hills are God's," and they find the poor man meat: the rich also need this prayer, because although they have the bread, yet they need the blessing; and what they have now may perish or be taken from them; and as preservation is a perpetual creation, so the continuing to rich men what God hath already bestowed is a continual giving it. Young men must pray, because their needs are like to be the longer; and old men, because they are present: but all these are to pray but for the present; that which in estimation of law is to be reckoned as imminent upon the present, and part of this state and condition. But it is great improvidence, and an unchristian spirit, for old men to heap up provisions, and load their sumpters still the more by how much their way is shorter. But there is also a bread

* Heaven touches the *latter*, as well as the spirit of faith and obedience. The *crowd* of heaven breathes in its worship. There, all unite in ascribing equal glory to God and the Lamb, and attributing to the blood of atonement all the glory of salvation. The church in heaven is thus the standard of truth to the church on earth.—Ed

which came down from heaven, a diviner nutriment of our souls, the food and wine of angels, Christ himself, as he communicates himself in the expresses of his words and sacraments : and if we be destitute of this bread, we are miserable and perishing people. We must pray that our souls also may feed upon those celestial viands prepared for us in the antepasts of the gospel, till the great and fuller meal of the supper of the lamb shall answer all our prayers and satisfy every desire.

8. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Not only those sins of infirmity, invasion, and sudden surprise, which, like excrescences of luxuriant trees, adhere to many actions by inadvertency, and by either natural weakness or accidental prejudice ; but also all those great sins which were washed off from our souls, when by choice and after the use of reason we gave up our names to Christ, when we first received the adoption of sons : for even those things were so pardoned, that we must for ever confess and glory in the divine mercy, and still ascertain it by performing what we then promised, and which were the conditions of our covenant. For although Christ hath taken off the guilt, yet still there remains the disreputation ; and St. Paul calls himself "the chiefest of sinners," not referring to his present condition, but to his former persecuting the church of God, which is one of the greatest crimes in the world, and for ever he asked pardon for it : and so must we, knowing that they may return ; if we shake off the yoke of Christ, and break his cords from us, the bands of the covenant evangelical, the sins will return so as to undo us. And this we pray with a tacit obligation to forgive : for so only and upon that condition we beg pardon to be given or continued respectfully ; that is, as we from our hearts forgive them that did us injury in any kind, never entertaining so much as a thought of revenge, but contrariwise loving them that did

us wrong ; for so we beg that God should do to us : and therefore it is but a lesser revenge to say, I will forgive, but I will never have to do with him. For if he become an object of charity, we must have to do with him to relieve him : because he needs prayers, we must have to do with him and pray for him : and to refuse his society, when it is reasonably and innocently offered, is to deny that to him, Christians have only been taught to deny to persons excommunicate, to persons under punishment, i. e. to persons not yet forgiven : for we shall have but an evil portion, if God should forgive our sins, and should not also love us, and do us grace, and bestow benefits upon us. So we must forgive others ; so God forgives us.

9. "And lead us not into temptation." St. Cyprian, out of an old Latin copy, reads it, "suffer us not to be led into temptation," that is, suffer us not to be overcome by temptation. And therefore we are bound to prevent our access to such temptation whose approximation is dangerous, and the contact is irregular and evil ; such as are temptations of the flesh : yet in other temptations the assault sometimes makes confident, and hardens a resolution. For some spirits, who are softened by fair usages, are steeled and emboldened by a persecution. But of what nature soever the temptations be, whether they be such whose approach a Christian is bound to fear, or such which are the certain lot of Christians, (such are troubles and persecutions, into which when we enter we must count it joy) yet we are to pray that we enter not into the possession of the temptation, that we be not overcome by it.

10. "But deliver us from evil." From the assaults or violence of evil, from the wicked one, who not only presents us with objects, but heightens our concupiscence, and makes us imaginative, fantastical, and passionate, setting on the temptation making the lust active, and the man full of appetite, and the appetite full

of energy and power : therefore deliver us from the evil one, who is interested as an enemy in every hostility and in every danger. Let not Satan have any power or advantage over us ; and let not evil men prevail upon us in our danger, much less to our ruin. Make us "safe under the covering of thy wings" against all fraud and every violence, that no temptation destroy our hopes, or break our strength, or alter our state, or overthrow our glories. In these last petitions, which concern ourselves, the soul hath affections proper to her own needs ; as in the former proportionate to God's glory. In the first of these, the affection of a poor, indigent, and necessitous beggar ; in the second, of a delinquent and penitent servant ; in the last, of a person in affliction and danger. And after all this the reason of our confidence is derived from God.

11. "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever." That is, these which we beg are for the honour of thy kingdom, for the manifestation of thy power, and the glory of thy name and mercies : and it is an express doxology or adoration, which is apt and fit to conclude all our prayers and addresses to God.

12. These are the generals and great treasures of matter to which all our present or sudden needs are reducible ; and when we make our prayers more minute and particular, if the instance be in matter of duty and merely spiritual, there is no danger : but when our needs are temporal, or we are transported with secular desires, all descending to particulars is a confining the divine providence, a judging for ourselves, a begging a temptation oftentimes, sometimes a mischief : and to beg beyond the necessities of our life, is a mutiny against that providence which assigns to Christians no more but "food and raiment" for their own use ; all other excrescences of possessions being entrusted to the rich man's dispensation, only as to a steward, and he shall be accountable for the

coat that lies by him, as the portion of moths, and for the shoes which are the spoils of mouldiness, and the contumely of plenty. "Grant me, O Lord, not what I desire, but what is profitable for me." For sometimes we desire that which in the succeeding event of things will undo us. This rule is in all things that concern ourselves. There is some little difference in the affairs and necessities of other men : for, provided we submit to the divine providence, and pray for good things for others only with a tacit condition, so far as they are good and profitable in order to the best ends, yet if we be particular, there is no covetousness in it ; there may be indiscretion in the particular, but in the general no fault, because it is a prayer and a design of charity. "For kings and all that are in authority" we may yet enlarge, and pray for a peaceable reign, true lieges, strong armies, victories and fair success in their just wars, health, long life, and riches, because they have a capacity which private persons have not ; and whatsoever is good for single persons, and whatsoever is apt for their uses as public persons, all that we may and we must pray for, either particularly, for so we may, or in general significations, for so we must at least : "that we may lead a godly, peaceable, and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty ;" that is St. Paul's rule, and the prescribed measure and purpose of such prayers. And in this instance of kings, we may pray for defeating all the king's enemies, such as are truly so ; and we have no other restraint upon us in this, but that we keep our desires confined within the limits of the end we are commanded ; that is, so far to confound the king's enemies, that he may do his duty, and we do ours, and receive the blessing : ever as much as we can to distinguish the malice from the person. But if the enemies themselves will not also separate what our intentions distinguish, that is, if they will not return to their duty, then let the prayers operate as God pleases, we

must be zealous for the end of the king's authority and peaceable government. By enemies I mean rebels or invaders, tyrants and usurpers; for in other wars there are many other considerations not proper for this place.

13. The next consideration will be concerning the manner; I mean both the manner of our persons, and the manner of our prayers; that is, with what conditions we ought to approach to God, and with what circumstances the prayers may or ought to be performed. The conditions to make our prayers holy and certain to prevail are, First, That we live good lives, endeavouring to confirm by holy obedience to all the divine commandments. This condition is expressly recorded by St. John; "Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, and whatsoever we ask of him we shall obtain:" and St. James affirms that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much:" and our blessed Saviour, limiting the confidence of our prayers for forgiveness to our charity and forgiving others, plainly tells us, that the uncharitable and unrighteous person shall not be heard. And the blind man in the gospel understood well what he said, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper, and doeth his will, him he heareth." And this was so decreed and resolved a point in the doctrine of their religion, that it was a proverbial saying. And although this discourse of the blind man was of a restrained occasion, and signified, if Christ had been a false prophet, God would not have attested his sermons with the power of miracles; yet in general also he had been taught by David, "if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer." And therefore when men "pray in every place, (for so they are commanded) let them lift up pure hands, without anger and contention." And indeed although every sin entertained with a free choice and a full understanding is an obstruction to our

prayers; yet the special sin of uncharitableness makes the biggest cloud, and is in the proper matter of it an indisposition for us to receive mercy: for he who is softened with apprehension of his own needs of mercy, will be tender-hearted towards his brother; and therefore he that hath no bowels here, can have no aptness there to receive or heartily to hope for mercy. But this rule is to be understood of persons who persevere in the habit and remanent affections of sin; so long as they entertain sin with love, complacency and joy, they are in a state of enmity with God, and therefore in no fit disposition to receive pardon and the entertainment of friends: but penitent sinners and returning souls, loaden and grieved with their heavy pressures, are next to holy innocents, the aptest persons in the world to be heard in their prayers for pardon; but they are in no farther disposition to large favours, and more eminent charities. A sinner in the beginning of his penance will be heard for himself, and yet also he needs the prayers of holy persons more signally than others; for he hath but some very few degrees of dispositions to reconciliation; but in prayers of intercession or mediation for others, only holy and very pious persons are fit to be interested. All men as matter of duty must pray for all men: but in the great necessities of a prince, of a church, or kingdom, or of a family, or of a great danger and calamity to a single person, only a Noah, a David, a Daniel, a Jeremy, an Enoch or Job, are fit and proportioned advocates. God so requires holiness in us that our prayers may be accepted, that he entertains them in several degrees according to the degrees of our sanctity; to fewer or more purposes, according as we are little or great in the kingdom of heaven. As for those irregular donations of good things which wicked persons ask for and have; they are either no mercies, but instruments of cursing and crime; or else they are designs of grace, intended to convince them of

their unworthiness, and so, if they become not instruments of their conversion, they are aggravations of their ruin.

14. Secondly, The second condition I have already explained in the description of the matter of our prayers. For although we may lawfully ask for whatsoever we need, and this leave is consigned to us in those words of our blessed Saviour, "Your heavenly Father knoweth what you have need of:" yet because God's providence walks in the great deep, that is, his footsteps are in the water, and leave no impression; no former act of grace becomes a precedent that he will give us that in kind which then he saw convenient, and therefore gave us, and now he sees to be inconvenient, and therefore does deny. Therefore in all things, but what are matter of necessary and unmingled duty, we must send up our prayers; but humility, mortification, and conformity to the divine will must attend for an answer, and bring back, not what the public embassy pretends, but what they have in private instructions to desire; accounting that for the best satisfaction which God pleases, not what I have either unnecessarily, or vainly, or sinfully desired.

15. Thirdly, when our persons are disposed by sanctity, and the matter of our prayers is hallowed by prudence and religious intentions, then we are bound to entertain a full persuasion and confident hope that God will hear us. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall obtain them," said our blessed Saviour: and St. James taught from that oracle, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God: but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed to and fro." Meaning, that when there is no fault in the matter of our prayers, but that we ask things pleasing to God, and there is no indisposition and hostility in our persons and manners between God and us,

then to doubt were to distrust God; for all being right on our parts, if we doubt the issue, the defaultance must be on that part, which to suspect were infinite impiety. But after we have done all we can, if, out of humility, and that we are not truly disposed, we doubt of the issue, it is a *molesty* which will not at all commend our persons, nor impede the event; provided we at no hand suspect either God's power or veracity. Putting trust in God is an excellent advantage to our prayers: "I will deliver him, (saith God,) because he hath put his trust in me." And yet distrusting ourselves, and suspecting our own dispositions, as it pulls us back in our actual confidence of the event, so because it abates nothing of our confidence in God, it prepares us to receive the reward of humility, and not to lose the praise of a holy trusting in the Almighty.

16. These conditions are essential: some other there are which are incidents and accessories, but at no hand to be neglected. And the first is, actual or habitual attention to our prayers, which we are to procure with moral and severe endeavours that we desire not God to hear us when we do not hear ourselves. To which purpose we must avoid, as much as our duty will permit us, multiplicity of cares and exterior employments; for a river cut into many rivulets divides also in its strength, and grows contemptible, and apt to be forded by a lamb, and drunk up by a summer sun: so is the spirit of man busied in variety and divided in itself: it abates its fervour, cools into indifference, and becomes trifling by its dispersion and inadvertency. Aquinas was once asked, with what compendium a man might best become learned; he answered, by reading of one book; meaning that an understanding entertained with several objects is intent upon neither, and profits not. And so it is when we pray to God: if the cares of the world intervene, they choke our desire into an indifferency, and suppress the flame

into a smoke, and strangle the spirit. But this being an habitual carelessness and intemperance of spirit, is an enemy to an habitual attention, and therefore is highly criminal, and makes our prayers to be but the labour of the lips, because our desires are lessened by the remanent affections of the world. But besides an habitual attention in our prayers, that is, a desire in general of all that our prayers pretend to in particular, there is also for the accommodation, and to facilitate the access of our prayers, required, that we attend actually to the words or sense of every collect or petition. To this we must contend with prayer, with actual dereliction and seposition of all our other affairs, though innocent and good in other kinds, by a present spirit. And the use of it is, that such attention is an actual conversing with God; it occasions the exercise of many acts of virtue, it increases zeal and fervency, and by reflection enkindles love and holy desires. And although there is no rule to determine the degree of our actual attention, and it is ordinarily impossible never to wander with a thought, or to be interrupted with a sudden immission into our spirit in the midst of prayers; yet our duty is, by mortification of our secular desires, by suppression of all our irregular passions, by reducing them to indifference, by severity of spirit, by enkindling our holy appetites and desires of holy things, by silence and meditation and repose, to get as forward in this excellency as we can: to which also we may be very much helped by ejaculatory prayers and short breathings; in which as, by reason of their short abode upon the spirit, there is less fear of diversion; so also they may so often be renewed, that nothing of the devotion may be unspent or expire for want of oil to feed and entertain the flame. But the determination of the case of conscience is this: habitual attention is absolutely necessary in our prayers, that is, it is altogether our duty to desire of God all that we pray for, though our mind be not

actually attending to the form of words; and therefore all worldly desires, that are inordinate, must be rescinded, that we more earnestly attend on God than on the world. He that prays to God to give him the gift of chastity, and yet secretly wishes rather for an opportunity of lust, and desires God would not hear him. (as St. Austin confesses of himself in his youth) that man sins for want of holy and habitual desires; he prays only with his lips, what he in no sense attests in his heart. Secondly, Actual attention to our prayers is also necessary, not only to avoid a sin, but that the present prayer become effectual. He that means to feast, and to get thanks of God, must invite the poor; and yet he that invites the rich, in that he sins not, though he hath no reward of God for that. So that prayer perishes to which the man gives no degree of actual attention, for the prayer is as if it were not, it is no more than a dream, or an act of custom and order, nothing of devotion, and so accidentally becomes a sin, by taking God's name in vain. Thirdly, It is not necessary to the prevalency of the prayer that the spirit actually accompany every clause or word; if it says a hearty amen, or in any part of it attests the whole, it is such an attention which the present condition of most men will sometimes permit. Fourthly, A wandering of the spirit through carelessness, or any vice, or inordinate passion, is in that degree criminal as is the cause, and it is heightened by the greatness of the interruption. Fifthly, It is only excused by our endeavours to cure it, and by our after acts either of sorrow, or repetition of the prayer, and reinforcing the intention. And certainly if we repeat our prayer, in which we have observed our spirits too much to wander, and resolve still to repeat it, (as our opportunities permit) it may in a good degree defeat the purpose of the enemy, when his own arts shall return upon his head, and the wandering of our spirits be made the occasion of a prayer, and the parent

of a new devotion. Sixthly, Lastly, according to the degrees of our actual attention, so our prayers are more or less perfect: a present spirit being a great instrument and testimony of wisdom, and apt to many great purposes; and our continual abode with God being a great endearment of our persons by increasing the affections.

17. Secondly, The second accessory is intensity of spirit or fervency; such as was that of our blessed Saviour, who prayed to his Father with strong cries and loud petitions, not clamorous in language, but strong in spirit, St. Paul also, when he was pressed with a strong temptation, prayed thrice, that is, earnestly; and St. James affirms this to be of great value and efficacy to the obtaining blessings, "the effectual fervent prayer of a just person avails much;" and Elias though "a man of like passions," yet by earnest prayer he obtained rain or drought, according as he desired. Now this is properly produced by the greatness of our desire of heavenly things, our true value and estimate of religion, our sense of present pressures, our fears: and it hath some accidental increases by the disposition of our body, the strength of fancy, and the tenderness of spirit, and relish for the dropping of religious discourses; and in all men is necessary to be so great, as that we prefer heaven and religion before the world, and desire them rather, with the choice of our wills and understanding: though there cannot always be that degree of sensible, pungent, or delectable affections towards religion, as towards the desires of nature and sense: yet ever we must prefer celestial objects, restraining the appetites of the world, lest they be immoderate, and heightening the desires of grace and glory, lest they become indifferent, and the fire upon the altar of incense be extinct. But the greater zeal and fervour of desire we have in our prayers, the sooner and the greater will the return of the prayer be, if the prayer be for spiritual objects. For other

things, our desires must be according to our needs, not by a value derived from the nature of the thing, but the usefulness it is of to us, in order to our greater and better purposes.

18. Thirdly, Of the same consideration it is, that we "persevere and be importunate," in our prayers, by repetition of our desires, and not remitting either our affections or our offices, till God, overcome by our importunity, give a gracious answer. Jacob, wrestled with the angel all night, and would not dismiss him till he had given him a blessing; "Let me alone," saith God, as if he felt a pressure and burthen lying upon him by our prayers, or could not quit himself, nor depart, unless we gave him leave. And since God is detained by our prayers, and we may keep him as long as we please, and that he will not go away till we leave speaking to him, he that will dismiss him till he hath his blessing, knows not the value of his benediction, or understands not the energy and power of a persevering prayer. And to this purpose "Christ spake a parable, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint: praying without ceasing," St. Paul calls it, that is, with continual addresses, frequent interpolations, never-ceasing renewing the request till I obtain my desire. For it is not enough to recommend our desires to God with one hearty prayer, and then forget to ask him any more; but so long as our needs continue, so long, in all times, and upon all occasions, to renew and repeat our desires: and this is "praying continually." Just as the widow did to the unjust judge, she never left going to him, she troubled him every day with her clamorous suit; so must we pray always, that is, every day, and many times every day, according to our occasions and necessities, or our devotion and zeal, or as we are determined by the customs and laws of a church: never giving over through weariness or distrust, often renewing our desires by a continual succession of devotions, returning at certain and deter-

minate periods. For God's blessings, though they come infallibly, yet not always speedily; saving only that it is a blessing to be delayed, that we may increase our desire, and renew our prayers, and do acts of confidence and patience, and ascertain and increase the blessing when it comes. For we do not more desire to be blessed than God does to hear us importunate for blessing: and he weighs every sigh, and bottles up every tear, and records every prayer, and looks through the cloud with delight to see us upon our knees, and when he sees his time, his light breaks through it, and shines upon us. Only we must not make our accounts for God according to the course of the sun, but the measures of eternity. He measures us by our needs, and we must not measure him by our impatience. "God is not slack, as some men count slackness," saith the apostle; and we find it so, when we have waited long. All the elapsed time is no part of the tediousness; the trouble of it is passed with itself: and for the future, we know not how little it may be; for ought we know we are already entered into the cloud that brings the blessing. However, pray till it comes: for we shall never miss to receive our desire, if it be holy, or innocent, and safe; or else we are sure of a great reward of our prayers.

19. And in this, so determined, there is no danger of blasphemy or vain repetitions: for those repetitions are vain which repeat the words, not the devotion; which renew the expression, and not the desire; and he that may pray the same prayer tomorrow which he said today, may pray the same at night which he said in the morning, and the same at noon which he said at night, and so in all the hours of prayer, and in all the opportunities of devotion. Christ in his agony "went thrice, and said the same words," but he had intervals for repetition; and his need and his devotion pressed him forward: and whenever our needs

do so, it is all one if we say the same words or others, so we express our desire, and tell our needs, and beg the remedy. In the same office and the same hour of prayer, to repeat the same things *often* hath but few excuses to make it reasonable, and fewer to make it pious: but to think that the prayer is better for such repetition is the fault which the holy Jesus condemned in the Gentiles, who in their hymns would say a name over a hundred times. But in this we have no rule to determine us in numbers and proportion, but right reason. God loves not any words the more for being said often; and those repetitions which are unreasonable in prudent estimation, cannot in any account be esteemed pious. But where a reasonable cause allows the repetitions, the same cause that makes it reasonable makes it also proper for devotion. He that speaks his needs, and expresses nothing but his fervour and greatness of desire, cannot be vain or long in his prayers; he that speaks impertinently, that is, unreasonably and without desires, is long, though he speak but two syllables. he that thinks for speaking much to be heard the sooner, thinks God is delighted in the labour of the lips: but when reason is the guide, and piety is the rule, and necessity is the measure, and desire gives the proportion, let the prayer be very long; he that shall blame it for its length must proclaim his disrelish both of reason and religion, his despite of necessity and contempt of zeal.

20. As a part and instance of our importunity in prayer it is usually reckoned and advised, that in cases of great, sudden, and violent need, we corroborate our prayers with a vow of doing something holy and religious in an uncommanded instance; something to which God had not formerly bound our duty, though fairly invited our will; or else, if we choose a duty in which we were obliged, then to vow the doing of it in a more excellent manner, with a greater inclination of the will, with a more fervent repetition of

the act, with some more noble circumstance, with a fuller assent of the understanding, or else adding a new promise to our old duty, to make it become more necessary to us, and to secure our duty. In this case, as it requires great prudence and caution in the susception, lest what we piously intend obtain a present blessing, and lay a lasting snare; so if it be prudent in the manner, holy in the matter, useful in the consequence, and safe in all the circumstances of the person, it is an endearing us and our prayer to God by the increase of duty and charity, and therefore a more probable way of making our prayers gracious and acceptable. And the religion of vows was not only hallowed by the example of Jacob at Bethel, of Hannah praying for a child and God hearing her, of David vowing a temple to God; and made regular and safe by the rules and cautions in Moses' law; but left by our blessed Saviour in the same constitution he found it, he having innovated nothing in the matter of vows: and it was practised accordingly in the instance of St. Paul at Cenchrea; of Ananias and Sapphira, who vowed their possessions to the use of the church; and of the widows in the apostolical age, who therefore vowed to remain in the state of widowhood, because concerning them who married after the entry into religion St. Paul says, "they have broken their first faith:" and such were they of whom our blessed Saviour affirms, "that some make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven," that is, such who promise to God a life of chastity. And concerning the success of prayer so seconded with a prudent and religious vow besides the instances of Scripture, we have the perpetual experience and witness of all Christendom; and in particular, our Saxon kings have been remarked for this part of importunity in their own chronicles. Osway got a great victory with unlikely forces against Penda the Dane, after his earnest prayer, and appendent vow: and Ceadwalla obtained of God

power to recover the Isle of Wight from the hands of infidels after he had prayed, and promised to return the fourth part of it to be employed in the proper services of God and of religion. This can have no objection or suspicion in it among wise and disabused persons: for it can be nothing but an increasing and a renewed act of duty, or devotion, or zeal, or charity, and the importunity of prayer acted in a more vital and real expression.

21. First, All else that is to be considered concerning prayer is extrinsical and accidental to it. Prayer is public, or private: in the communion or society of saints, or in our closets: these prayers have less temptation to vanity: the other have more advantages of charity, example, fervour and energy. In public offices we avoid singularity, in the private we avoid hypocrisy: those are of more edification, these of greater retiredness and silence of spirit: those serve the needs of all the world in the first intention, and our own by consequence: these serve our own needs first, and the public only by a secondary intention: these have more pleasure, they more duty: these are the best instruments of repentance, where our confessions may be more particular, and our shame less scandalous; the other are better for eucharist and instruction, for edification of the church and glorification of God.

22. Secondly, The posture of our bodies in prayer had as great variety as the ceremonies and civilities of several nations came to. The Jews most commonly prayed standing: so did the pharisee and the publican in the temple. So did the Primitive Christians in all their greater festivals, and intervals of jubilee, in their penances they kneeled. The monks in Cassian sat when they sang the Psalter. And in every country, whatsoever by the custom of the nation was a symbol of reverence and humility, of silence and attention, of gravity and modesty, that posture they translated to their prayers.

But in all nations bowing the head, that is, a laying down our glory at the feet of God was the manner of worshippers : and this was always the more humble and the lower, as their devotion was higher ; and was very often expressed by prostration, or lying flat upon the ground ; and this all nations did and all religions. Our deportment ought to be grave, decent, humble, apt for adoration, apt to edify ; and when we address ourselves to prayer, not instantly to leap into the office, as the judges of the Arcopagus into their sentence, “ without preface or preparatory affections ;” but considering in what presence we speak, and to what purposes, let us balance our fervour with reverential fear : and when we have done, not rise from the ground as if we vaulted, or were glad we had done ; but, as we begin with desires of assistance, so end with desires of pardon and acceptance, concluding our longer offices with a shorter mental prayer of more private reflection and reverence, designing to mend what we have done amiss, or to give thanks and proceed if we did well, and according to our powers.

23. Thirdly, In private prayers it is permitted to every man to speak his prayers, or only to think them, which is a speaking to God. Vocal or mental prayer is all one to God, but in order to us they have their several advantages. The sacrifice of the heart and the calves of the lips make up a holocaust to God : but words are the arrest of the desires, and keep the spirit fixed, and in less permissions to wander from fancy to fancy ; and mental prayer is apt to make the greater fervour, if it wander not : our office is more determined by words ; but we then actually think of God when our spirits only speak. Mental prayer, when our spirits wander, is like a watch standing still, because the spring is down ; wind it up again, and it goes on regularly : but in vocal prayer, if the words run on, and the spirit wanders, the clock strikes false, the right hand points not to the right hour,

because something is in disorder, and the striking is nothing but noise. In mental prayer we confess God’s omniscience ; in vocal prayer we call the angels to witness. In the first our spirits rejoice in God ; in the second the angels rejoice in us. Mental prayer is the best remedy against lightness, and indifferency of affections ; but vocal prayer is the aptest instrument of communion. That is more angelical, but yet fittest for the state of separation and glory ; this is but human, but it is apter for our present constitution. They have their distinct properties, and may be used according to several accidents, occasions, or dispositions.

THE PRAYER.

1. O holy and eternal God, who hast commanded us to pray unto thee in all our necessities, and to give thanks unto thee for all our instances of joy and blessing, and to adore thee in all thy attributes and communications, thy own glories and thy eternal mercies ; give unto me thy servant the spirit of prayer and supplication. that I may understand what is good for me, that I may desire regularly, and choose the best things, that I may conform to thy will, and submit to thy disposing, relinquishing my own affections and imperfect choice. Sanctify my heart and spirit, that I may sanctify thy name, and that I may be gracious and accepted in thine eyes. Give me the humility and obedience of a servant, that I may also have the hope and confidence of a son, making humble and confident addresses to the throne of grace ; that in all my necessities I may come to thee for aids, and may trust in thee for a gracious answer, and may receive satisfaction and supply.

2. Give me a sober, diligent and recollected spirit in my prayers, neither choked with cares,

nor scattered by levity, nor discomposed by passion, nor estranged from thee by inadvertency, but fixed fast to thee by the indissoluble hands of a great love and a pregnant devotion : and let the beams of thy Holy Spirit descending from above enlighten and enkindle it with great fervours, and holy importunity, and unwearied industry ; that I may serve thee, and obtain thy blessing by the assiduity and zeal of perpetual religious offices. Let my prayers come before thy presence, and the lifting up of my hands be a daily sacrifice, and let the fires of zeal not go out by night or day ; but unite my prayers to the intercession of thy holy Jesus, and to a communion of those offices which angels and beatified souls do pay before the throne of the Lamb, and at the celestial altar ; that my prayers being hallowed by the merits of Christ, and being presented in the phial of the saints, may ascend thither where thy glory dwells, and from whence mercy and eternal benediction descends upon the church.

3. Lord, change my sins into penitential sorrow, my sorrow to petition, my petition to eucharist : that my prayers may be consummate in the adorations of eternity, and the glorious participation of the end of our hopes and prayers, the fulness of never fading charity, and fruition of thee, O holy and eternal God, blessed Trinity and mysterious Unity, to whom all honour, and worship, and thanks, and confession, and glory, be ascribed for ever and ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE XIII.

Of the Third Additional Precept of Christ, viz.

OF THE MANNER OF FASTING.

I. Fasting, being directed in order to other ends, as for mortifying the body, taking away

that fuel which ministers to the flame of lust, or else relating to what is past, when it becomes an instrument of repentance, and a part of that revenge which St. Paul affirms to be the effect of godly sorrow, is to take its estimate for value, and its rules for practice, by analogy and proportion to those ends to which it does co-operate. Fasting before the holy sacrament is a custom of the Christian church, and derived to us from great antiquity ; and the use of it is, that we might express honour to the mystery, by suffering nothing to enter into our mouths before the symbols. Fasting to this purpose is not an act of mortification, but of reverence and venerable esteem of the instruments of religion, and so it is to be understood. And thus also, not to eat or drink before we have said our morning devotions, is esteemed to be a religious decency, and preference of prayer and God's honour before our temporal satisfaction, a symbolical attestation that we esteem the words of God's mouth more than our necessary food. It is like the zeal of Abraham's servant, who would not eat or drink till he had done his errand. And in pursuance of this act of religion, by the tradition of their fathers it grew to be a custom of the Jewish nation, that they should not eat bread upon their solemn festivals before the sixth hour ; that they might first celebrate the rites of their religious solemnities, before they gave satisfaction to the lesser desires of nature. And therefore it was a reasonable satisfaction of the objection made by the assembly against the inspired apostles in pentecost, " These are not drunk, as ye suppose, seeing, it is but the third hour of the day : meaning, that the day being festival, they knew it was not lawful for any of the nation to break their fast before the sixth hour ; for else they might easily have been drunk by the third hour, if they had taken their morning's drink in a freer proportion. And true it is that religion snatches even at little things : and as it teaches us to observe all

the great commandments and significations of duty, so it is not willing to pretermitt any thing, which, although by its greatness it cannot of itself be considerable, yet by its smallness it may become a testimony of the greatness of the affection, which would not omit the least minutes of love and duty. And therefore when the Jews were scandalized at the disciples of our Lord for rubbing the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, as they walked through the fields early in the morning, they intended their reproof not for breaking the rest of the day, but the solemnity; for eating before the public devotions were finished. Christ excused it by the necessity and charity of the act; they were hungry, and therefore having so great need, they might lawfully do it: meaning, that such particles and circumstances of religion are not to be neglected, unless where greater cause of charity or necessity does supervene.

2. But when fasting is in order to greater and more concerning purposes, it puts on more religion, and becomes a duty, according as it is necessary or highly conducing to such ends, to the promoting of which we are bound to contribute all our skill and faculties. Fasting is principally operative to mortification of carnal appetites, to which feasting and full tables do minister aptness, and power, and inclinations. "When I fed them to the full, then they committed adultery, and assembled by troops in the harlots' houses." And if we observe all our own vanities, we shall find that upon every sudden joy, or a prosperous accident, or an opulent fortune, or a pampered body, and highly spirited and inflamed, we are apt to rashness, levities, inconsiderate expressions, scorn and pride, idleness, wantonness, curiosity, niceness, and impatience. But fasting is one of those afflictions which reduces our body to want, our spirits to soberness, our condition to sufferance, our desires to abstinence and customs of denial; and so, by taking off the inundations of sensu-

ality, leaves the enemies within in a condition of being easier subdued. Fasting directly advances towards chastity; and by consequence and indirect powers to patience, and humility, and indifference. But then it is not the fast of a day that can do this; it is not an act, but a *state* of fasting, that operates to mortification. A perpetual temperance and frequent abstinence may abate such proportions of strength and nutriment, as to procure a body mortified and lessened in desires. And thus St. Paul kept his body under, using severities to it for the taming its rebellions and distemperatures. And St. Jerome reports of St. Hilarion, that when he had fasted much and used coarse diet, and found his lust too strong for such austerities, he resolved to increase it to the degree of mastery, lessening his diet, and increasing his hardship till he should rather think of food than wantonness. And many times the fastings of some men are ineffectual, because they promise themselves cure too soon, or make too gentle applications, or put less proportions into their antidotes. I have read of a maiden, that, seeing a young man much transported with her love, told him, she had made a vow to fast forty days with bread and water, of which she must discharge herself before she could think of his suit: and desired of him as a testimony of his love, that he also would be a party in the same vow. The young man undertook it, that he might give probation of his love: but because he had been used to a delicate and nice kind of life, in twenty days he was so weakened, that he thought more of death than love; and so got a cure for his intemperance, and was wittily couzened into a remedy. But St. Hierom's counsel in this question is most reasonable, not allowing violent and long fasts, and then returns to an ordinary course; for these are too great changes of diet to consist with health, and too sudden and transient to obtain a permanent and natural effect: but a belly always hungry,

a table never full, a meal little and necessary, no extravagances, no freer repast, this is a state of fasting, which will be found to be of best avail to suppress pungent lusts and rebellious desires. And it were well to help this exercise with the assistances of such austerities which teach patience, and ingenerate a passive fortitude, and accustom us to a despite of pleasures, and which are consistent with our health. For if fasting be left to do the work alone, it may chance either to spoil the body, or not to spoil the lust. Hard lodging, uneasy garments, laborious postures of prayer, journeys on foot, sufferance of cold, paring away the use of ordinary solaces, denying every pleasant appetite, rejecting the most pleasant morsels; these are in the rank of bodily exercises, which though (as St. Paul says) of themselves they profit little, yet they accustom us to acts of self-denial in exterior instances, and are not useless to the designs of mortifying carnal and sensual lusts. They have "a proportion of wisdom" with these cautions, *viz.* in will-worship, that is, in voluntary susception, when they are not imposed as necessary religion; in humility, that is, without contempt of others that use them not; "in neglecting of the body," that is, when they are done for discipline and mortification, that the flesh by such handlings and rough usages become less satisfied and more despised.

3. As fasting hath respect to the future, so also to the present: and so it operates in giving assistance to prayer. There is a kind of devil that is "not to be ejected but by prayer and fasting," that is, prayer elevated and made intense by a defecated and pure spirit, not loaden with the burden of meat and vapours. St. Basil affirms, that there are certain angels deputed by God to minister, and to describe all such in every church who mortify themselves by fasting; as if paleness and a meagre visage were that mark in the forehead which the angel observed when he signed the saints in Jerusalem to escape

the judgment. Prayer is the wings of the soul, and fasting is the wings of prayer. Tertullian calls it the nourishment of prayer. But this is a discourse of Christian philosophy; and he that chooses to do any act of spirit, or understanding, or attention, after a full meal, will then perceive that abstinence had been the *better* disposition to any intellectual and spiritual action. And therefore the church of God ever joined fasting to their more solemn offices of prayer. The apostles fasted and prayed when they laid hands and invoked the Holy Ghost upon Saul and Barnabas. And these also, "when they had prayed with fasting, ordained elders in the churches of Lystra and Iconium." And the vigils of every holiday tell us, that the devotion of the festival is promoted by the fast of the vigils.

1. But when fasting relates to what is past, it becomes an instrument of repentance, it is a punitive and an afflictive action, an effect of godly sorrow, a testimony of contrition, "a judging of ourselves," and chastening our bodies, "that we be not judged of the Lord." The fast of the Ninevites, and the fast the prophet Joel calls for, and the discipline of the Jews in the rites of expiation, proclaim this usefulness of fasting in order to repentance. And indeed it were a strange repentance that had no sorrow in it, and a stranger sorrow that had no affliction; but it were the *strangest* scene of affliction in the world, when the sad and afflicted person shall eat freely, and delight himself, and to the banquets of a full table serve up the chalice of tears and sorrow, and no bread of affliction! Certainly he that makes much of himself hath no great indignation against the sinner, when himself is the man. And it is but a gentle revenge and an easy judgment, when the sad sinner shall do penance in *good* meals, and expiate his sin with sensual satisfaction! So that fasting relates to religion in all variety and difference of time: it is an antidote against

the poison of sensual temptations, an advantage to prayer, and an instrument of extinguishing the guilt and the affections of sin by judging ourselves, and representing in a judicatory of our own, even ourselves being judges, that sin deserves condemnation, and the sinner merits a high calamity. Which excellences I repeat in the words of Baruch the scribe, he that was amanuensis to the prophet Jeremy, "The soul that is greatly vexed, which goeth stooping and feeble, and the eyes that fail, and the hungry soul, will give thee praise and righteousness, O Lord."

5. But now as fasting hath divers ends, so also it hath divers laws. If fasting be intended as an instrument of prayer, it is sufficient that it be of that quality and degree that the spirit be clear, and the head undisturbed; an ordinary act of fast, an abstinence from a meal, or a deferring it, or a lessening it when it comes, and the same abstinence repeated according to the solemnity, and intendment of the offices. And this is evident in reason, and the former instances, and the practice of the church, dissolving some of her fasts which were in order only to prayer by noon, and as soon as the great and first solemnity of the day is over. But if fasting be intended as a punitive act, and an instrument of repentance, it must be greater. St. Paul at his conversion continued three days without eating or drinking. It must have in it so much affliction as to express the indignation, and to condemn the sin, and to judge the person. And although the measure of this cannot be exactly determined, yet the general proportion is certain; for a greater sin there must be a greater sorrow, and a greater sorrow must be attested with a greater penalty. And Ezra declares his purpose thus, "I proclaimed a fast, that we might afflict ourselves before God." Now this is no farther required, nor is it in this sense farther useful, but that it be a trouble to the body, an act of judging and severity; and this is to be judged

by proportion to the sorrow and indignation, as the sorrow is to the crime. But this affliction needs not to leave any remanent effect upon the body; but such transient sorrow which is consequent to the abstinence of certain times designed for the solemnity is sufficient as to this purpose. Only it is to be renewed often, as our repentance must be habitual and lasting: but it may be commuted with other actions of severity and discipline, according to the customs of a church, or the capacity of the persons, or the opportunity of circumstances. But if the fasting be intended for mortification, then it is fit to be more severe, and medicinal by continuance, and quantity, and quality. To repentance, total abstinences without interruption, that is, during the solemnity, short and sharp, are most apt: but towards the mortifying a lust those sharp and short fasts are not reasonable; but a diet of fasting, an habitual subtraction of nutriment from the body, a long and lasting austerity, increasing in degrees, but not violent in any. And in this sort of fasting we must be highly careful we do not violate a duty by fondness of an instrument: and because we intend fasting as a help to mortify the lust, let it not destroy the body, or retard the spirit, or violate our health, or impede us in any part of our necessary duty. As we must be careful that our fast be reasonable, serious, and apt to the end of our designs; so we must be curious, that by helping one duty uncertainly, it do not certainly destroy another. Let us do it like honest persons and just, without artifices and hypocrisy: but let us also do it like wise persons, that it be neither in itself unreasonable, nor by accident become criminal.

6. In the pursuance of this discipline of fasting, the doctors of the church and guides of souls have not unusefully prescribed other annexes and circumstances: as that all the other acts of deportment be *symbolical* to our fasting. If we fast for mortification, let us

entertain nothing of temptation or semblance to invite a lust; no sensual delight, no freer entertainments of our body to countenance or corroborate a passion. If we fast that we may pray the better, let us remove all secular thoughts for that time: for it is in vain to alleviate our spirits of the burthen of meat and drink, and to depress them with the loads of care. If for repentance we fast, let us be most curious that we do nothing contrary to the design of repentance, knowing that a sin is more contrary to repentance than fasting is to sin; and it is the greatest stupidity in the world to do that thing which I am now mourning for, and for which I do judgment upon myself. And let all our actions also pursue the same design, helping one instrument with another, and being so zealous for the grace, that we take in all the aids we can to secure the duty. For to fast from flesh, and to eat delicate *fish*; not to eat meat, but to drink rich *wines* freely; to be sensual in the objects of our other appetites, and restrained only in one, to have no dinner, and that day to run on hunting, or to play at cards: are not *handsome* instances of sorrow, or devotion, or self-denial. It is best to accompany our fasting with the retirements of religion, and the enlargements of charity, giving to others what we deny to ourselves. These are proper actions: and although not in every instance necessary to be done at the same time, (for a man may give his alms in other circumstances, and not amiss); yet as they are very convenient and proper to be joined in that society, so to do anything contrary to religion or to charity, to justice or to piety, to the design of the person or the design of the solemnity, is to make that become a sin which of itself was no virtue, but was capable of being hallowed by the end and the manner of its execution.

7. This discourse hath hitherto related to private fasts, or else to fasts indefinitely. For

what rules soever every man is bound to observe in private for fasting piously, the same rules the governors of a church are to intend in their public prescription. And when once authority hath intervened, and proclaimed a fast, there is no new duty incumbent upon the private, but that we obey the circumstances, letting them to choose the time and the end for us: and though we must prevaricate neither, yet we may improve both; we must not go less, but we may enlarge; and when fasting is commanded only for repentance, we may also use it to prayers, and to mortification. And we must be careful that we do not obey the letter of the prescription, and violate the intention, but observe all that care in public fasts which we do in private, knowing that our private ends are included: the public, as our persons are in the communion of saints, and our hopes in the common inheritance of sons: and see that we do not fast in order to a purpose, and yet use it so as that it shall be to no purpose. Whosoever so fasts as that it be not effectual in some degree towards the end, or so fasts that it be accounted of itself a duty and an act of religion, without order to its proper end, makes his act vain, because it is unreasonable; or vain, because it is superstitious.

THE PRAYER.

O holy and eternal Jesu, who didst for our sake fast forty days and forty nights, and hast left to us thy example, and thy prediction, that in the days of thy absence from us we thy servants and children of thy bride-chamber, should fast: teach us to do this act of discipline so, that it may become an act of religion. Let us never be like Esau, valuing a dish of meat above a blessing: but let us deny our appetites

of meat and drink, and accustom ourselves to the yoke, and subtract the fuel of our lusts, and the incentives of all our unworthy desires: that our bodies being free from the intemperances of nutriment, and our spirits from the load and pressure of appetite, we may have no desires but of thee; that our outward man daily decaying by the violence of time, and mortified by the abatements of its too free and unnecessary support; it may by degrees resign to the entire dominion of the soul and may pass from vanity to piety, from weakness to ghostly strength, from darkness and mixtures of impurity to great transparencies and clarity in the society of a beatified soul, reigning with thee in the glories of eternity, O holy and eternal Jesu. Amen.

DISCOURSE XIV.

Of the Miracles which Jesus wrought for confirmation of his Doctrine, during the whole time of his Preaching.

1. When Jesus had ended his sermon on the mount, he descended into the valleys, to consign his doctrine by the power of miracles and the excellency of a rare example; that he might not lay a yoke upon us which himself also would not bear. But as he became the author, so also "the finisher of our faith;" what he designed in proposition, he represented in his own practice; and by these acts made a new sermon, teaching all prelates and spiritual persons to descend from their eminency of contemplation, and the authority and business of their discourses to apply themselves to do more material and corporal mercies to afflicted persons, and to preach by example as well as by their homilies. For he that teaches others well, and practises contrary, is like a fair candlestick,

bearing a goodly and bright taper, which sends light to 'all the house, but round about itself there is a shadow and circumstant darkness. The prelate should be the light consuming and spending itself to enlighten others, scattering his rays round about from the angles of contemplation, and from the corners of practice, but himself always tending upwards, till at last he expires into the element of love and celestial fruition.

2. But the miracles which Jesus did were next to infinite; and every circumstance of action that passed from him, as it was intended for mercy, so also for doctrine, and the impotent or diseased persons were not more cured than we instructed. But because there was nothing in the actions but what was a pursuance of the doctrines delivered in his sermons, in the sermon we must look after our duty, and look upon his practice as a verification of his doctrine, and instrumental also to other purposes. Therefore in general if we consider his miracles, we shall see that he did design them to be a compendium of faith and charity. For he chose to instance his miracles in actions of mercy, that all his powers might especially determine upon bounty and charity; and yet his acts of charity were so miraculous, that they became an argument of the divinity of his person and doctrine. Once he turned water into wine, which was a mutation by a supernatural power in a natural suscipient, where a person was not the subject but an element; and yet this was done to rescue the poor bridegroom from affront and trouble, and to do honour to the holy rite of marriage. All the rest, (unless we except his walking upon the waters) during his natural life, were actions of relief and mercy, according to the design of God, manifesting his power most chiefly in showing mercy.

3. The great design of miracles was to prove his mission from God, to convince the world of sin, to demonstrate his power of forgiving sins

to endear his precepts, and that his disciples "might believe in him, and that believing they might have life through his name." For he, to whom God by doing miracles gave testimony from heaven, must needs be sent from God; and he who had received power to restore nature, and to create new organs, and to extract from incapacities, and from privations to reduce habits, was Lord of nature, and therefore of all the world. And this could not but create great confidences in his disciples, that himself would verify those great promises upon which he established his law. But that the argument of miracles might be infallible, and not apt to be reproved, we may observe its eminency by divers circumstances of probability, heightened up to the degree of moral demonstration.

4. First, The holy "Jesus did miracles which no man (before him, or at that time) ever did." Moses smote the rock, and water gushed out; but he could not turn that water into wine: Moses cured no diseases by the empire of his will, or the word of his mouth; but "Jesus healed all infirmities." Elisha raised a dead child to life; but Jesus raised one who had been dead four days, and buried and corrupted. Elias, and Samuel, and all the prophets, and the succession of the high priests in both the temples, put all together, never did so many or so great miracles as Jesus did. He cured leprous persons by his touch: he restored sight to the blind, who were such not by any intervening accident hindering the act of the organ, but by nature, who were born blind, and whose eyes had not any natural possibility to receive sight, who could never see without creating of new eyes for them, or some integral part co-operating to vision; and therefore the miracle was wholly an effect of a divine power, for nature did not at all co-operate; or, that I may use the elegant expression of Dante, it was such

for which nature never did heat the iron, nor beat the anvil. He made crooked limbs become straight, and the lame to walk; and habitual diseases and inveterate of eighteen years continuance (and once of thirty-eight) did disappear at his speaking, like darkness at the presence of the sun. He cast out devils, who by the majesty of his person were forced to confess and worship him, and yet by his humility and restraints were commanded silence, or to go whither he pleased; and without his leave all the powers of hell were as infirm and impotent as a withered member, and were not able to stir. He raised three dead persons to life; he fed thousands of people with two small fishes, and five little barley cakes: and, as a consummation of all powers and all miracles, he foretold, and verified it, that himself would rise from the dead after three days' sepulture. But when himself had told them, he "did miracles which no man else ever did," they were not able to reprove his saying with one single instance; but the poor blind man found him out one instance to verify his assertion, "it was yet never heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind."

5. Secondly, The scene of his preaching and miracles was Judea, which was the pale of the church, and God's inclosed portion, "of whom were the oracles and the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ was to come, and to whom he was promised. Now since these miracles were for verification of his being the Christ, the promised Messiah, they were then to be esteemed a convincing argument, when all things else concurring, as the predictions of the prophets, the synchronisms, and the capacity of his person, he brought miracles to attest himself to be the person so declared and signified. God would not suffer his people to be abused by miracles, nor from heaven would speak so loud in testimony of anything contrary to his own will and purposes. They

— a cui natura
Non scaldò ferro mai, né batte ancuale,

to whom he gave the oracles, and the law, and the predictions of the Messiah, and declared beforehand, that at the coming of the "Messiah the blind should see, the lame should walk, and the deaf should hear, the lepers should be cleansed, and to the poor the gospel should be preached," could not expect a greater conviction for acceptation of a person, than when that happened which God himself by his prophets had consigned as his future testimony; and if there could have been deception in this, it must needs have been inculpable in the deceived person, to whose error a divine prophecy had been both nurse and parent. So that taking the miracles Jesus did in that conjunction of circumstances, done to that people to whom all their oracles were transmitted by miraculous verifications, miracles so many, so great, so accidentally, and yet so regularly, to all comers and necessitous persons that prayed it, after such predictions and clearest prophecies, and these prophecies owned by himself, and sent by way of symbol and mysterious answer to John the Baptist, to whom he described his office by recounting his miracles in the words of the prediction; there cannot be any fallibility or weakness pretended to this instrument of probation, applied in such circumstances to such a people, who, being dear to God, would be preserved from invincible deceptions, and being commanded by him to expect the Messiah in such an equipage of power and demonstration of miracles, were therefore not deceived, nor could they, because they were bound to accept it.

6. Thirdly, So that now we must not look upon these miracles as an argument primarily intended to convince the Gentiles, but the Jews. It was a high probability to them also, and so it was designed also in a secondary intention: but it could not be an argument to them so certain, because it was destitute of two great supporters. For they never believed the prophets foretelling the Messiah to be such, nor

yet saw the miracles done: so that they had no testimony of God beforehand, and were to rely upon human testimony for the matter of fact; which, because it was fallible, could not infer a necessary conclusion alone and of itself, but it put on degrees of persuasion, as the testimony had degrees of certainty or universality; that they also "which see not, and yet have believed, might be blessed." And therefore Christ sent his apostles to convert the Gentiles, and supplied in their case what in his own could not be applicable, or so concerning them. For he sent them to do miracles in the sight of the nations, that they might not doubt the matter of fact; and prepared them also with a prophecy, foretelling that they should do the same and greater miracles than he did: they had greater prejudices to contest against, and a more unequal distance from belief and aptnesses to credit such things; therefore it was necessary that the apostles should do greater miracles to remove the greater mountains of objection. And they did so; and by doing it in pursuance and testimony of the ends of Christ and Christianity, verified the fame and celebrity of their Master's miracles, and represented to all the world his power, and his veracity, and his divinity.

7. Fourthly, For when the holy Jesus appeared upon the stage of Palestine, all things were quiet and at rest from prodigy and wonder; nay, John the Baptist, who by his excellent sanctity and austerities had got great reputation to his person and doctrines, yet did no miracle; and no man else did any, save some few exorcists among the Jews cured some demoniacs and distracted people. So that in this silence a prophet appearing with signs and wonders had nothing to lessen the arguments, no opposite of like power, or appearances of a contradictory design. And therefore it persuaded infinitely, and was certainly operative upon all persons, whose interest and love of the world did not destroy the piety of their wills, and put their

understanding into fetters. And Nicodemus, a doctor of the law, being convinced, said, "we know that thou art a doctor sent from God; for no man can do those things which thou doest, unless God be with him." But when the devil saw what great affections and confidences these miracles of Christ had produced upon all persons, he too late strives to lessen the argument by playing an aftergame; and weakly endeavours to abuse vicious persons (whose love to their sensual pleasures was of power to make them take anything for argument to retain them) by such low, few, inconsiderable, uncertain, and suspicious instances, that it grew to be the greatest confirmation and extrinsical argument in behalf of religion, that either friend or foe upon his own industry could have represented. Such as were the making an image speak, or fetching fire from the clouds; and that the images of Diana Cyndias and Vesta among the Jasiæmans would admit no rain to wet them, or cloud to darken them; and that the bodies of them who entered into the temple of Jupiter in Arcadia would cast no shadow: which things Polybius himself, one of their own superstition, laughs at as impostures, and says they were no way to be excused, unless the pious purpose of the inventors did take off from the malice of the lie. But the miracles of Jesus were confessed, and wondered at by Josephus, were published to all the world by his own disciples, who never were accused, much less convicted, of forgery, and they were acknowledged by Celsus and Julian, the greatest enemies of Christ.

8. But farther yet, themselves gave it out that one Caius was cured of his blindness by Æsculapius, and so was Valerius Aper; and at Alexandria, Vespasian cured a man of the gout by treading upon his toes, and a blind man with spittle. And when Adrian the Emperor was sick of a fever, and would have killed himself, it is said, two blind persons were cured by touch-

ing him, whereof one of them told him that he also should recover. But although Vespasian by the help of Apollonius Tyaneus, who was his familiar, who also had the devil to be his, might do anything within the power of nature, or by permission might do much more; yet besides that this was of an uncertain and less credible report, if it had been true, it was also infinitely short of what Christ did, and was a weak, silly imitation, and usurping of the argument which had already prevailed upon the persuasions of men beyond all possibility of confutation. And for that of Adrian, to have reported it is enough to make it ridiculous; and it had been a strange power to have cured two blind persons, and yet be so unable to help himself, as to attempt to kill himself by reason of anguish, impatience, and despair.

9. Fifthly, When the Jews and Pharisees believed not Christ for his miracles, and yet perpetually called for a sign, he refused to give them a sign which might be less than their prejudice, or the persuasions of their interest; but gave them one which alone is greater than all the miracles which ever were done, or said to be done, by any antichrist or enemies of the religion, put all together; a miracle which could have no suspicion of imposture, a miracle without instance, or precedent, or imitation: and that is, Jesus' lying in the grave three days and three nights, and then rising again, and appearing to many, and conversing for forty days together, giving probation of his rising, of the verity of his body, making a glorious promise, which at Pentecost was verified, and speaking such things which became precepts and parts of the law for ever after.

10. Sixthly, I add two things more to this consideration. First, that the apostles did such miracles, which were infinitely greater than the pretensions of any adversary, and inimitable by all the powers of man or darkness. They raised the dead, they cured all diseases by

their very shadow passing by, and by the touch of garments ; they converted nations, they foretold future events, they themselves spake with tongues, and they gave the Holy Ghost by imposition of hands, which enabled others to speak languages which immediately before they understood not, and to cure diseases, and to eject devils. Now supposing miracles to be done by Gentile philosophers and magicians after ; yet when they fall short of these in power, and yet teach a contrary doctrine, it is a demonstration that it is a lesser power, and therefore the doctrine not of divine authority and sanction. And it is remarkable, that among all the Gentiles none ever reasonably pretended to a power of casting out devils. For the devils could not get so much by it, as things then stood : and besides, in whose name should they do it who worshipped none but devils and false gods ? which is too violent presumption, that the devil was the architect in all such buildings. And when the seven sons of Sceva who was a Jew, (amongst whom it was sometimes granted to cure demoniacs) offered to exercise a possessed person, the devil would by no means endure it, but beat them for their pains. And yet, because it might have been for his purpose to have enervated the reputation of St. Paul, and by a voluntary cession equalled St. Paul's enemies to him, either the devil could not go out but at the command of a Christian ; or else to have gone out would have been a disservice and ruin to his kingdom : either of which declares, that the power of casting out devils is a testimony of God, and a probation of the divinity of a doctrine, and a proper argument of Christianity.

11. Seventhly, but, besides this, I consider, that the holy Jesus, having first possessed upon just title all the reasonableness of human understanding, by his demonstration of a miraculous power, in his infinite wisdom knew that the devil would attempt to gain a party by the same instrument, and therefore so ordered it, that

the miracle which should be done, or pretended to, by the devil, or any of the enemies of the cross of Christ, should be a confirmation of Christianity, not do it disservice : for he foretold that antichrist and other enemies " should come in prodigies, and lying wonders and signs." Concerning which, although it may be disputed whether they were truly miracles, or mere deceptions and magical pretences ; yet because they were such which the people could not discern from miracles really such, therefore it is all one, and in this consideration are to be supposed such : but certainly he that could foretel such a future contingency, or such a secret of predestination, was able to know from what principle it came ; and we have the same reason to believe that antichrist should do miracles to evil purposes, as that he should do any at all ; he that foretold us of the man, foretold us also of the imposture, and commanded us not to trust him. And it had been more likely for antichrist to prevail upon Christians by doing no miracles, than by doing any : for if he had done none, he might have escaped without discovery ; but by doing miracles, as he verified the wisdom and prescience of Jesus, so he declared to all the Church that he was the enemy of their Lord, and therefore less likely to deceive ; for which reason it is said, that " he shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect ;" that is therefore not possible, because that by which he insinuates himself to others, is by the elect, the church and chosen of God, understood to be his sign and mark of discovery, and a warning. And therefore as the prophecies of Jesus were an infinite verification of his miracles, so also this prophecy of Christ concerning antichrist disgraces the reputation and faith of the miracles he shall act. The old prophets foretold of the Messiah, and of his miracles of power and mercy, to prepare for his reception and entertainment ; Christ alone, and his apostles from him, foretold of antichrist, and

that he should come in all miracles of deception and lying, that is, with true or false miracles to persuade a lie: and this was to prejudice his being accepted, according to the law of Moses. So that as all that spake of Christ bade us believe him for the miracles; so all that foretold of antichrist bade us disbelieve him the rather for his: and the reason of both is the same, because the mighty and "surer word of prophecy" (as St. Peter calls it) being the greatest testimony in the world of a divine principle, gives authority, or reprobates with the same power. They who are the predestinate of God, and they that are the *præsciti*, the foreknown and marked people, must needs stand or fall to the divine sentence; and such must this be acknowledged: for no "enemy of the cross," not the devil himself, ever foretold such a contingency, or so rare, so personal, so voluntary, so unnatural an event, as this of the great antichrist.

12. And thus the holy Jesus, having "shewed forth the treasures of" his Father's wisdom in revelations and holy precepts, and upon the stock of his Father's greatness having dispended and demonstrated great power in miracles, and these being instanced in acts of mercy, he mingled the glories of heaven to transmit them to earth, to raise us up to the participations of heaven: he was pleased, by healing the bodies of infirm persons, to invite their spirits to his discipline, and by his power to convey healing, and by that mercy to lead us into the treasures of revelation; that both bodies and souls, our wills and understandings, by divine instruments might be brought to divine perfections in the participations of a divine nature. It was a miraculous mercy that God should look upon us in our blood, and a miraculous condescension that his Son should take our nature; and even this favour we could not believe without many miracles: and so contrary was our condition to all possibilities of happiness, that if salvation had not marched to us all the way in miracle.

we had perished in the ruins of a sad eternity. And now it would be but reasonable, that, since God for our sakes had rescinded so many laws of natural establishment, we also for his, and for our own, would be content to do violence to those natural inclinations, which are also criminal when they derive into action. Every man living in the state of grace is a perpetual miracle, and his passions are made reasonable, as his reason is turned to faith, and his soul to spirit, and his body to a temple, and earth to heaven; and less than this will not dispose us to such glories, which being the portion of saints and angels, and the nearest communications with God, are infinitely above what we see, or hear, or understand.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal Jesu, who didst receive great power, that by it thou mightest convey thy Father's mercies to us impotent and wretched people: give me grace to believe that heavenly doctrine which thou didst ratify with arguments from above, that I may fully assent to all those mysterious truths which integrate that doctrine and discipline in which the obligations of my duty and the hopes of my felicity are deposited. And to all those glorious verifications of thy goodness and thy power add also this miracle, that I, who am stained with leprosy of sin, may be cleansed, and my eyes may be opened, that I may see the wondrous things of thy law: and raise thou me up from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that I may for ever walk in the land of the living, abhorring the works of death and darkness: that as I am by thy miraculous mercy partaker of the first, so also I may be accounted worthy of the second resurrection: and as by faith, hope, charity,

and obedience I receive the fruit of thy miracles in this life, so in the other I may partake of thy glories, which is a mercy above all miracles. Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief: and grant that no indisposition or incapacity of mine may hinder the wonderful operations of thy grace; but let it be thy first miracle to turn

my water into wine, my barrenness into fruitfulness, my adversations from thee into unions and intimate adhesions to thy infinity, which is the fountain of mercy and power. Grant this for thy mercy's sake, and for the honour of those glorious attributes in which thou hast revealed thyself and thy Father's excellences to the world, O holy and eternal Jesu. Amen.

SECTION XIII.

OF THE SECOND YEAR OF THE PREACHING OF JESUS.

WHEN the first year of Jesus, the year of peace and undisturbed preaching, was expired, "there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." This feast was the second pass-over he kept after he began to preach; not the feast of Pentecost or tabernacles, both which were passed before Jesus came last from Judea. When he was now come, he finds an "impotent person lying at the pool of Bethesda, waiting till the angel should move the waters, after which whosoever first stepped in was cured of his infirmity." The poor man had waited "thirty-eight years," and still was prevented by some other of the hospital that needed a physician. But Jesus seeing him, had pity on him, cured him, and bade him "take up his bed and walk." This cure happened to be wrought "upon the Sabbath," for which the Jews were so moved with indignation, that they "thought to slay him:" and their anger was enraged by his calling himself "the Son of God, and making himself equal with God."

Upon occasion of this offence, which they snatched at before it was ministered, Jesus discourses upon "his mission, and derivation of his authority from the Father; of the union between them, and the excellent communications of power, participation of dignity, delegation of judicature, reciprocations and reflexions of honour from the Father to the Son, and back again to the Father. He preaches of life and salvation to them that believe in him; prophesies

of the resurrection of the dead by the efficacy of the voice of the Son of God; speaks of the day of judgment, the differing conditions after, of salvation and damnation respectively; confirms his words and mission by the testimony of John the Baptist, of Moses, and the other Scriptures, and of God himself." And still the scandal rises higher: "for in the second Sabbath after the first," that is, in the first day of unleavened bread, which happened the next day after the weekly Sabbath, the disciples of Jesus pull ripe ears of corn, rub them in their hands, and eat them to satisfy their hunger: for which he offered satisfaction to their scruples, convincing them, that works of necessity are to be permitted even to the breach of a positive temporary constitution, and that works of mercy are the best serving of God upon any day whatsoever, or any part of the day that is vacant to other offices, and proper for a religious festival.

But when neither reason nor religion would give them satisfaction, but that they went about to kill him, he withdrew himself from Jerusalem, and returned to Galilee; whither the scribes and Pharisees followed him, observing his actions, and whether or no he would prosecute that which they called profanation of their Sabbath, by doing acts of mercy upon that day. He still did so. For entering into one of the synagogues of Galilee upon the Sabbath, Jesus saw a man (whom St. Hierom reports to have been a mason) coming to Tyre, and complaining

that his hand was withered, and desiring help of him, that he might again be restored to the use of his hands lest he should be compelled with misery and shame to beg his bread. Jesus restored his hand as whole as the other, in the midst of all those spies and enemies. Upon which act, being confirmed in their malice, the Pharisees went forth, and joined with the Herodians, (a sect of people who said Herod was the Messiah, because by the decree of the Roman senate, when the sceptre departed from Judah,* he was declared king,) and both together took counsel how they might kill him.

Jesus therefore departed again to the seacoast, and his companions increased as his fame, for he was now "followed by new multitudes from Galilee, from Judea, from Jerusalem, from Idumea, from beyond Jordan, from about Tyre and Sidon;" who, hearing the report of his miraculous power to cure all diseases, by the word of his mouth, or the touch of his hand, or the handling his garment, came with their ambulatory hospital of sick and their possessed; and they pressed on him, but to touch him, and were all immediately cured. Devils confessing publicly, that he was "the Son of God," till they were upon all such occasions restrained, and compelled to silence.

But now Jesus having commanded a ship to be in readiness against any inconvenience or troublesome pressures of the multitude, "went up into a mountain to pray, and continued in prayer all night," intending to make the first ordination of apostles; which the next day he did, choosing out of the number of his disciples these twelve to be apostles; Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John, the sons of thunder, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphæus and Simon the Zelot, Judas the brother of James, and Judas

Iscariot. With these descending from the mountain to the plain, he repeated the same sermon, or much of it, which he had before preached in the first beginning of his prophesyings; that he might publish his gospel to these new auditors, and also more particularly inform his apostles in "the doctrine of the kingdom:" for now because he "saw Israel scattered like sheep having no shepherd," he purposed to send these twelve abroad to preach repentance and the approximation of the kingdom; and therefore first instructed them in the mysterious parts of his holy doctrine, and gave them also particular instructions together with their temporary commission for that journey.

"For Jesus sent them out by two and two, giving them power over unclean spirits," and to heal all manner of sickness and diseases; telling them they were "the light, and the eyes, and the salt of the world," so intimating their duties of diligence, holiness, and incorruption; giving them in charge to preach the gospel, to dispense their power and miracles freely, as they had received it, to anoint sick persons with oil, not to enter into any Samaritan town, but to "go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," to provide no *viaticum* for their journeys, but to put themselves upon the religion and piety of their proselytes: he arms them against persecutions, gives them leave to fly the storm from city to city, promises them the assistances of his spirit, encourages them by his own example of long-sufferance, and by instances of divine providence expressed even to creatures of smallest value, and by promise of great rewards to the confident confession of his name; and furnishes them with some propositions, which are like so many bills of exchange, upon the trust of which they might take up necessities: promising great retributions not only to them who quit anything of value for the sake of Jesus, but to them that offer a cup of water to a thirsty

* Mosheim, with more probability, regards the Herodians, as the sect who espoused the cause of the descendants of Herod the Great, whom they deemed to have been unjustly treated by the Romans.—Ed.



disciple. And with these instructions they departed to preach in the cities.

7. And Jesus returning to Capernaum received the address of a faithful centurion of the legion called the Iron Legion, (which usually quartered in Judea,) in behalf of his servant, whom he loved, and who was grievously afflicted with the palsy; and healed him, as a reward and honour to his faith. And from thence going to the city Nain, he raised to life the only son of a widow, whom the mourners followed in the street, bearing the corpse sadly to his funeral. Upon the fame of these and divers other miracles; John the Baptist, who was still in prison, (for he was not put to death till the latter end of this year,) sent two of his disciples to him by divine providence, or else by John's designation, to minister occasion of his greater publication, inquiring if he was the Messiah. To whom Jesus returned no answer, but a demonstration taken from the nature of the thing, and the glory of the miracles, saying, return to "John and tell him what ye see; for the deaf hear, the blind see, the lame walk, the dead are raised, and the lepers are cleansed, and to the poor the gospel is preached:" which were the characteristic notes of the Messiah, according to the predictions of the holy prophets.

8. When John's disciples were gone with this answer, Jesus began to speak concerning John, "of the austerity and holiness of his person, the greatness of his function, the divinity of his commission, saying, 'that he was greater than a prophet, a burning and shining light, the Elias that was to come,' and the consummation or ending of the old prophets: adding withal, that the perverseness of that age was most notorious in the entertainment of himself and the Baptist: for neither could the Baptist, 'who came neither eating nor drinking, (that by his austerity and mortified deportment he might invade the judgment and affections of

the people,) nor Jesus, who came both eating and drinking,' (that by a moderate and an affable life, framed to the compliance and common use of men he might sweetly insinuate into the affections of the multitude,) obtain belief amongst them. They could object against every thing, but nothing could please them. But wisdom and righteousness had a theatre in its own family, and 'is justified of all her children.' Then he proceeds to a more applied reprehension of Capernaum and Chorazin and Bethsaida, for being pertinacious in their sins and infidelity, in defiance and reproof of all the mighty works which had been wrought in them. But these things were not revealed to all dispositions; the wise and mighty of the world were not subjects prepared for the simplicity and softer impresses of the gospel, and the downright severity of its sanctions. And therefore Jesus glorified God for the magnifying of his mercy, in that these things which were 'hid from the great ones were revealed unto babes;' and concludes this sermon with an invitation of all wearied and disconsolate persons, loaded with sin and misery, 'to come to him, promising ease to their burthens, and refreshment to their weariness, and to exchange their heavy pressures into an easy yoke, and a light burthen.' "

9. When Jesus had ended this sermon, one of the Pharisees, named Simon, invited him to eat with him; into whose house when he was entered, "a certain woman that was a sinner," abiding there in the city, heard of it; her name was Mary: she had been married to a noble personage, a native of the town and castle of Magdal, from whence she had her name of Magdalen, though she herself was born in Bethany; a widow she was, prompted by her wealth, liberty and youth to an intemperate life, and too free entertainments. She came to Jesus into the Pharisee's house: not (as did the staring multitude) to glut her eyes with the

sight of a miraculous and glorious person ; nor (as did the centurion, or the Syro-phœnician, or the ruler of the synagogue) for cure of her sickness, or in behalf of her friend, or child, or servant ; but (the only example of so coming) she came in remorse and regret for her sins, she came to Jesus to lay her burthen at his feet, and to present him with a broken heart, and a weeping eye, and great affection, and a box of nard pistic, salutary and precious. For she came trembling, and fell down before him, weeping bitterly for her sins, pouring out a flood great enough to “wash the feet of the blessed Jesus, and wiping them with the hairs of her head ; after which she brake the box, and anointed his feet with ointment.” Which expression was so great an ecstasy of love, sorrow, and adoration, that to anoint the feet even of the greatest monarch was long unknown, and in all the pomps and greatnesses of the Roman prodigality it was not used till Otho taught it to Nero ; in whose instance it was by Pliny reckoned for a prodigy of unnecessary profusion, and in itself, without the circumstance of so free a dispensation, it was a present for a prince, and an alabaster-box of nard pistic was sent as a present from Cambyzes to the king of Ethiopia.

10. When Simon observed this sinner so busy in the expression of her religion and veneration to Jesus, he thought within himself that this was no prophet, that did “not know her to be a sinner,” or no just person that would suffer her to touch him. For although the Jews’ religion did permit harlots of their own nation to live, and enjoy the privileges of their nation, save that their oblations were refused : yet the Pharisees, who pretended to a greater degree of sanctity than others, would not admit them to civil usages, or the benefits of ordinary society ; but thought religion itself and the honour of a prophet was concerned in the interests of the same superciliousness : and therefore Simon

made an objection within himself. Which Jesus knowing, (for he understood his thoughts as well as his words,) made her apology and his own by a civil question, expressed in a parable of two debtors, to whom a greater and a less debt respectively was forgiven ; both of them concluding, that they would love their merciful creditor in proportion to his mercy and donative : and this was the case of Mary Magdalen, to whom because “much was forgiven, she loved much,” and expressed it in characters so large, that the Pharisee might read his own incivilities and inhospitable entertainment of the master, when it stood confronted with the magnificence of Mary Magdalen’s penance and charity.

11. When Jesus had dined, he was presented with the sad sight of a poor demoniac possessed with a blind and a dumb devil, in whose behalf his friends intreated Jesus, that he would cast the devil out ; which he did immediately, and the blind man saw, and the dumb spake, so much to the amazement of the people, that they ran in so prodigious companies after him, and so scandalized the Pharisees, who thought that by means of this prophet their reputation would be lessened and their schools empty, that first a rumour was scattered up and down from an uncertain principle, but communicated with tumult and apparent noises, that Jesus was beside himself. Upon which rumour his friends and kindred came together to see, and to make provisions accordingly ; and the holy Virgin-mother came herself, but without any apprehensions of any such horrid accident. The words and things she had from the beginning laid up in her heart would furnish her with principles exclusive of all apparitions of such fancies ; but she came to see what that persecution was, which under that colour, it was likely the Pharisees might commence.

12. When the mother of Jesus and his kindred came, they found him in a house, encircled with

people, full of wonder and admiration : and there the holy Virgin-mother might hear part of her own prophecy verified, that the generations of the earth should call her blessed ; for a woman worshipping Jesus, cried out “ Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck.” To this Jesus replied, not denying her to be highly blessed who had received the honour of being the mother of the Messiah, but advancing the dignities of spiritual excellences far above this greatest temporal honour in the world, “ Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and do it.” For in respect of the issues of spiritual perfections and their proportionable benedictions, all immunities and temporal honours are empty and hollow blessings ; and all relations of kindred disband and empty themselves into the greater channels and floods of divinity.

13. For when Jesus being in the house, they told him his mother and his brethren staid for him without ; he told them, those relations were less than the ties of duty and religion : for those dear names of mother and brethren, which are hallowed by the laws of God and the endearments of nature, are made far more sacred when a spiritual cognation does supervene, when the relations are subjected in persons religious and holy : but if they be abstract and separate, the conjunction of persons in spiritual bands, in the same faith, and the same hope, and the union of them in the same mystical head, is an adunation nearer to identity than those distances between parents and children, which are only cemented by the actions of nature, as it is of distinct consideration from the spirit. For Jesus pointing to his disciples said, “ Behold my mother and my brethren ; for whosoever doeth the will of my father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

14. But the Pharisees upon the occasion of the miracles, renewed the old quarrel ; “ He casteth out devils by Beelzebub.” Which senseless and

illiterate objection Christ having confuted, charged them highly upon the guilt of an unpardonable crime ; telling them, that the so charging those actions of his, done in the virtue of the divine Spirit, is a sin against the Holy Ghost : and however they might be bold with the Son of man, and prevarications against his words or injuries to his person might upon repentance and baptism find a pardon ; yet it was a matter of greater consideration to sin against the Holy Ghost ; that would find no pardon here, nor hereafter. But taking occasion from this discourse, he by an ingenious and mysterious parable gives the world great caution of recidivation and backsliding after repentance. For if “ the devil returns into a house once swept and garnished, he bringeth seven spirits more impure than himself ; and the last estate of that man is worse than the first.

15. After this, Jesus went from the house of the Pharisee, and, coming to the sea of Tiberias or Genesareth, (for it was called the sea of Tiberias from a town on the banks of the lake,) taught the people upon the shore, himself sitting in the ship ; but he taught them by parables, under which were hid mysterious senses, which shined through their veil like a bright sun, through an eye closed with a thin eyelid ; it being light enough to shew their infidelity, but not to dispel those thick Egyptian darknesses which they had contracted by their habitual indispositions and pertinacious aversions. By the parable of “ the sower scattering his seed by the way-side, and some on stony, some on thorny, some on good ground,” he intimated the several capacities or indispositions of men’s hearts, the carelessness of some, the frowardness and levity of others, the easiness and softness of a third, and how they are spoiled with worldliness and cares, and how many ways there are to miscarry, and that but one sort of men receive the word, and bring forth the fruits of a holy life. By the parable of tares permitted to grow amongst the

wheat, he intimated the toleration of dissenting opinions not destructive of piety or civil societies. By the three parables of the seed growing insensibly, of the grain of mustard seed swelling up to a tree, of a little leaven qualifying the whole lump, he signified the increment of the gospel, and the blessings upon the apostolical sermons.

16. Which parables when he had privately to his apostles, rendered into their proper sense, he added to them two parables concerning the dignity of the gospel, comparing it to treasure hid in a field, and a jewel of great price, for the purchase of which every good merchant must quit all that he hath rather than miss it: telling them withal, that however purity and spiritual perfections were intended by the gospel, yet it would not be acquired by every person; but the public professors of Christianity should be a mixed multitude, like a net inclosing fishes good and bad. After which discourses he retired from the seaside, and went to his own city of Nazareth; where he preached so excellently upon certain words of the prophet Isaiah, that all the people wondered at the wisdom which he expressed in his divine discourses. But the men of Nazareth did not do honour to the prophet, that was their countryman, because they knew him in all the disadvantages of youth, and kindred, and trade, and poverty; still retaining in their minds the infirmities and humilities of his first years, and keeping the same apprehensions of him as a man and a glorious prophet, which they had to him a child in the shop of a carpenter. But when Jesus in his sermon had reprov'd their infidelity, at which he wonder'd, and therefore did but few miracles there in respect of what he at done at Capernaum, and intimated the prelation of that city before Nazareth, they thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which the city was built, intending to throw him down headlong. But his work was not yet

finished, therefore he passing through the midst of them went his way.

17. Jesus therefore departing from Nazareth went up and down to all the towns and castles of Galilee, attended by his disciples, and certain women out of whom he had cast unclean spirits: such as were Mary Magdalen, Johanna wife to Chuza Herod's steward, Susanna, and some others, who did for him offices of provision, and ministered to him out of their own substance, and became parts of that holy college which about this time began to be full; because now the apostles were returned from their preaching, full of joy that the devils were made subject to the word of their mouth, and the empire of their prayers, and invocation of the holy name of Jesus. But their Master gave them a lenitive to assuage the tumour and excrescency, intimating that such privileges are not solid foundations of a holy joy; but only so far as they co-operate toward the great end of God's glory and their own salvation, to which when they are consigned, and their names written in heaven, in the book of election and registers of predestination, then their joy is reasonable, holy, true, and perpetual.

18. But when Herod had heard these things of Jesus, presently his apprehensions were such as derived from his guilt, he thought it was John the Baptist who was risen from the dead, and that these mighty works were demonstrations of his power, increased by the superadditions of immortality and diviner influence made proportionable to the honour of a martyr, and the state of separation. For a little before this time Herod had sent to the castle of Macherus, where John was prisoner, and caused him to be beheaded. His head Herodias buried in her own palace, thinking to secure it against a reunion, lest it should again disturb her unlawful lusts, and disquiet Herod's conscience. But the body the disciples of John gathered up, and carried it with honour and sorrow, and buried it

in Sebaste, in the confines of Samaria, making his grave between the bodies of Elizeus and Abdias the prophets. And about this time was the passover of the Jews.

DISCOURSE XV.

Of the excellency, ease, reasonableness, and advantages of bearing Christ's yoke, and living according to his institution.

1. The Hely Jesus came to break from off our necks two great yokes; the one of sin, by which we were fettered and imprisoned in the condition of slaves and miserable persons; the other of Moses' law, by which we were kept in pupillage and minority, and a state of imperfection; and thus asserted us into "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." The first was a despotic empire, and the government of a tyrant: the second was of a schoolmaster, severe, absolute and imperious; but it was in order to a farther good, yet nothing pleasant in the sufferance and load. And now Christ having taken off these two put on a third. He quits us of our burthen, but not of our duty: and hath changed the former tyranny and the less perfect discipline into the sweetness of paternal government, and the excellency of such an institution whose every precept carries part of its reward in hand, and assurances of after glories. Moses' law was like sharp and unpleasant physic, certainly painful, but uncertainly healthful. For it was not then communicated to them by promise and universal revelations, that the end of their obedience should be life eternal: but they were full of hopes it might be so, as we are of health when we have a learned and wise physician. But as yet the reward was in a cloud, and the hopes in fetters and confinement.

But the law of Christ is like Christ's healing of diseases; he does it easily, and he does it infallibly. The event is certainly consequent, and the manner of cure is by a touch of his hand, or a word of his mouth, or an approximation to the hem of his garment, without pain and vexatious instruments. My meaning is, that Christianity is by the assistance of Christ's spirit, which he promised us and gave us in the gospel, made very easy to us: and yet a reward so great is promised, as were enough to make a lame man to walk, and a broken arm endure the burthen; a reward great enough to make us willing to do violence to all our inclinations, passions, and desires. A hundred weight to a giant is a light burden, because his strength is proportionably great, and makes it as easy to him as an ounce is to a child. And yet if we had not the strength of giants, if the hundred weight were of gold or jewels, a weaker person would think it no trouble to bear that burden, if it were the reward of his portage and the hire of his labours. The Spirit is given to us to enable us, and heaven is promised to encourage us; the first makes us able, and the second makes us willing: and when we have power and affections we cannot complain of pressure. And this is the meaning of our blessed Saviour's invitation: "come to me, for my burden is light, my yoke is easy;" which St. John also observed, "for this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh, even our faith: that is, our belief of God's promises, the promise of the Spirit for present aid, and of heaven for the future reward, is strength enough to overcome all the world.

2. But besides that God hath made his yoke easy by exterior supports, more than ever was in any other religion. Christianity is of itself, according to human estimate, a religion more

easy and desirable by our natural and reasonable appetites, than sin in the midst of all its pleasures and imaginary felicities. Virtue hath more pleasure in it than sin, and hath all satisfactions to every desire of man, in order to human and prudent ends ; which I shall represent in the considerations of these particulars. To live according to the laws of Jesus is in some things most natural and proportionable to the desires and first intentions of nature. Secondly, There is in it less trouble than in sin. Thirdly, It conduces infinitely to the content of our lives, and to natural and political satisfactions. Fourthly, It is a means to preserve our temporal lives long and healthy. Fifthly, It is most reasonable ; and he only is prudent that does so, and he a fool that does not. And all this besides the considerations of a glorious and happy eternity.

3. Concerning the first, I consider, that we do very ill when, instead of making our natural infirmity an instrument of humility, and of recourse to the grace of God, we pretend the sin of Adam to countenance our actual sins, natural infirmity to excuse our malice ; either laying Adam in fault for bringing the disability upon us, or God, for putting us into the necessity. But the evils that we feel in this are from the rebellion of the inferior appetite against reason, or against any religion that puts restraint upon our first desires. And therefore in carnal and sensual instances accidentally we find the more natural averseness, because God's laws have put our irascible and concupiscible faculties in fetters and restraints ; yet in matters of duty, which are of immaterial and spiritual concernment, all our natural reason is a perfect enemy and contradiction to, and a law against, vice. It is natural for us to love our parents, and they who do not are unnatural ; they do violence to those dispositions which God gave us to the constitution of our nature, and for the designs of virtue : and all those tendernesses of affection,

those bowels and relenting dispositions, which are the endearments of parents and children, are also the bands of duty. Every degree of love makes duty delectable ; and therefore either by nature we are inclined to hate our parents, which is against all reason and experience, or else we are by nature inclined to do to them all that which is the effect of love to such superiors and principles of being and dependency : and every prevarication from the rule, effects and expresses of love, is a contradiction to nature, and a mortification ; to which we cannot be invited by any thing from within, but by something from without, that is violent and preternatural. There are also many other virtues even in the matter of sensual appetite which none can lose, but by altering in some degree the natural disposition. And I instance in the matter of carnality and uncleanness, to which possibly some natures may think themselves apt and disposed : but yet God hath put into our mouths a bridle to curb the licentiousness of our speedy appetite, putting into our very natures a principle as strong to restrain it as there is in us a disposition apt to invite us ; and this is also in persons who are most apt to the vice, young persons, to whom God hath given a modesty and shame of nature, that the entertainments of lusts may become contradictions to our retreating and backward modesty, more than they are satisfactions to our too-forward appetites. It is as great a mortification and violence to nature to blush, as to lose a desire ; and we find it true, when persons are invited to confess their sins, or to ask forgiveness publicly, a secret smart is not so violent as a public shame : and therefore to do an action which brings shame all along, and opens the sanctuaries of nature, and makes all her retirements public, and dismantles her inclosure, as lust does, and the shame of carnality, hath in it more asperity and abuse to nature, than the short pleasure to which we are

invited can repay. And, if lust hath in it dissonancies to nature, there are but few apologies left to excuse our sins upon nature's stock: and all that system of principles and reasonable inducements to virtue, which we call "the law of nature," is nothing else but that firm ligature and incorporation of virtue to our natural principles and dispositions, which who so prevaricates does more against nature than he that restrains his appetite. And besides these particulars, there is not in our natural discourse any inclination directly and by intention of *itself*, contrary to the love of God; if by God we understand that fountain of being which is infinitely perfect in itself, and of great good to us; and whatsoever is so apprehended, it is as natural for us to love, as to love any thing in the world; for we can love nothing but what we believe to be good in itself, or good to us. And beyond this, there are in nature many principles and reasons to make an aptness to acknowledge and confess God; and by the consent of nations, which they also have learned from the dictates of their nature, all men in some manner or other worship God. And therefore when this our nature is determined in its own indefinite principle to the manner of worship, all acts against the love, the obedience and the worship of God, are also against nature, and offer it some rudeness and violence. And I shall observe this, and refer it to every man's reason and experience, that the great difficulties of virtue, as commonly apprehended, commence not so much upon the stock of nature, as of education and evil habits. Our virtues are difficult, because we at first get ill habits, and these habits must be unrooted before we do well; and that is our trouble. But if by the strictness of discipline and wholesome education we begin at first in our duty and the practice of virtuous principles, we shall find virtue made as natural to us, while it is customary and habitual, as we pretend infir-

mity to be and propensity to vicious practices. And this we are taught by that excellent Hebrew who said, "Wisdom is easily seen of them that love her, and found of such as seek her: she preventeth them that desire her, in making herself first known unto them. Whoso seeketh her early shall have no great travel; for he shall find her sitting at his doors."

4. Secondly, In the strict observances of the law of Christianity there is less trouble than in the *habitual* courses of sin. For if we consider the general design of Christianity, it propounds to us in this world nothing that is of difficult purchase; nothing beyond what God allots us by the ordinary and common providence; such things which we are to receive without care and solicitous vexation: so that the ends are not big, and the way is easy; this walked over with much simplicity and sweetness, and those obtained without difficulty. He that propounds to himself to live low, pious, humble, and retired, his main employment is nothing but sitting quiet, and undisturbed with variety of impertinent affairs; but he that loves the world and its acquisitions entertains a thousand businesses, and every business hath a world of employment, and every employment is multiplied and made intricate by circumstances, and every circumstance is to be disputed, and he that disputes ever hath two sides in enmity and opposition; and by this time there is a genealogy, a long descent and cognation of troubles, branched into so many particulars, that it is troublesome to understand them, and much more to run through them. The ways of virtue are very much upon the defensive; and the work one, uniform, and little: they are like war within a strong castle, if they stand upon their guard, they seldom need to strike a stroke. But a vice is like storming a fort, full of noise, trouble, labour, danger, and disease. How easy a thing is it to restore the pledge? but if a man means to defeat him that trusted him,

what a world of arts must he use to make pretences? to delay first, then to excuse, then to object, then to intricate the business, next to quarrel, then to forswear it, and all the way to palliate his crime, and represent himself honest? And if an oppressing and greedy person have a design to cozen a young heir, or to get his neighbour's land, the cares of every day and the interruptions of every night's sleep, are more than the purchase is *worth*; since he might buy virtue at half that watching, and the less painful care of a fewer number of days. A plain story is soonest told, and best confutes an intricate lie. And when a person is examined in judgment, one false answer asks more wit for its support and maintenance than a history of truth. And such persons are put to so many shameful retreats, false colours, and daubings with untempered mortar, to avoid contradiction or discovery, that the labour of a false story seems, in the order of things, to be designed the beginning of its punishment. And if we consider how great a part of our religion consists in prayer, and how easy a thing God requires of us when he commands us to pray for blessings, the duty of a Christian cannot seem very troublesome.

5. And indeed I can hardly instance in any vice but there is visibly more *pain* in the order of acting and observing it, than in the acquisition or promotion of virtue. I have seen drunken persons, in their seas of drink and talk, dread every cup as a blow, and they have used devices and private arts to escape the punishment of a full draught; and the poor wretch being condemned by the laws of drinking to his measure, was forced and haled to execution, and he suffered it, and thought himself engaged to that person who with much kindness and importunity invited him to a fever: but certainly there was more pain in it than in the strictness of holy and severe temperance. And he that shall compare the troubles and dangers of an

ambitious war with the gentleness and easiness of peace, will soon perceive that every tyrant and usurping prince, that snatches at his neighbour's rights, hath *two* armies, one of men, and the other of cares. Peace sheds no blood, but of the pruned vine; and hath no business, but modest and quiet entertainments of the time, opportune for piety, and circled with reward. But God often punishes ambition and pride with lust; and he sent a "thorn in the flesh" as a corrective to the elevations and grandezza of St. Paul, growing up from the multitude of his revelations: and it is not likely the punishment should have less trouble than the crime, whose pleasures and obliquity this was designed to punish. And indeed every experience can verify, that an adulterer hath in him the impatience of desires, the burnings of lust, the fear of shame, the apprehensions of a jealous, abused, and an enraged husband. He endures affronts, mistimings, tedious waitings, the dullness of delay, the regret of interruption, the confusion and amazements of discovery, the scorn of a reproached vice, the debasings of contempt upon it; unless the man grows impudent, and then he is more miserable upon another stock. But David was so put to it, to attempt, to obtain, to enjoy Bathsheba, and to prevent the shame of it, that the difficulty was greater than all his wit and power, and it drove him into base and unworthy arts, which only discovered him the more, and multiplied his crime. But while he enjoyed the innocent pleasures of his lawful bed, he had no more trouble in it than there was in inclining his head upon his pillow. The ways of sin are crooked, desert, rocky and uneven: they are broad indeed, and there is a variety of ruins, and allurements to entice fools, and a large theatre to act the bloody tragedies of souls upon; but they are not smooth, or safe, or delicate. The ways of virtue are straight, but not crooked; narrow, but not unpleasant.

There are *two* vices for *one* virtue : and therefore the way to hell must needs be of greater extent, latitude, and dissemination : but because virtue is but *one* way, therefore it is easy, regular, and apt to walk in without error or diversions. "Narrow is the gate, and straight is the way." It is true, considering our evil customs and depraved natures, by which we have made it so to us. But God hath made it more passable by his grace and present aids ; and St. John Baptist receiving his commission to preach repentance, it was expressed in these words, "Make plain the paths of the Lord." Indeed repentance is a rough and a sharp virtue, and like a mattock and spade breaks away all the roughnesses of the passage, and hindrances of sin : but when we enter into the dispositions which Christ hath designed to us, the way is more plain and easy than the ways of death and hell. Labour it hath in it, just as all things that are excellent ; but no confusions, no distractions of thought, no amazements, no labyrinths, or intricacy of counsels : but it is like the labours of agriculture, full of health and simplicity, plain and profitable, requiring diligence, but such in which crafts and painful stratagems are useless and impertinent. But vice hath oftentimes so troublesome a retinue, and so many objections in the event of things, is so entangled in difficult and contradictory circumstances, hath in it parts so opposite to each other, and so inconsistent with the present condition of the man, or some secret design of his, that those little pleasures which are its focus and pretence, are less perceived and least enjoyed, while they begin in fantastic semblances, and rise up in smoke, vain and hurtful, and end in dissatisfaction.

6. But it is considerable, that God, and the sinner, and the devil, all join in increasing the difficulty and trouble of sin ; upon *contrary* designs indeed, but all co-operate to the verification of this discourse. For God by his re-

straining grace, and the checks of a tender conscience, and the bands of public honesty, and the sense of honour and reputation, and the customs of nations, and the severities of laws, makes that, in most men, the choice of vice is imperfect, dubious, and troublesome, and the pleasures abated, and the apprehensions various and in differing degrees ; and men act their crimes while they are disputing against them, and the balance is cast by a few grains, and scruples vex and disquiet the possession ; and the difference is perceived to be so little, that inconsideration and inadvertency is the greatest means to determine many men to the entertainment of a sin. And this God does with a design to lessen our choice, and to disabuse our persuasions from arguments and weak pretences of vice, and to invite us to the trials of virtue, when we see its enemy giving us such ill conditions. And yet the sinner himself makes the business of sin greater ; for its nature is so loathsome, and its pleasure so little, and its promises so unperformed, that when it lies open, easy, and apt to be discerned, there is no argument in it ready to invite us ; and men hate a vice which is every day offered and prostitute. and when they seek for pleasure, unless difficulty presents it, as there is nothing in it really to persuade a choice, so there is nothing strong or witty enough to abuse a man. And to this purpose (amongst some others, which are malicious and crafty) the devil gives assistance knowing that men despise what is cheap and common, and suspect a latent excellency to be in difficult and forbidden objects : and therefore the devil sometimes crosses an opportunity of sin, knowing that the desire is the iniquity, and does his work sufficiently ; and yet the crossing the desire by impeding the act heightens the appetite, and makes it more violent and impatient. But by all these means sin is made more troublesome than the pleasures of the temptation can account for : and it will be a

strange imprudence to leave virtue upon pretence of its difficulty, when for that very reason we the rather entertain the instances of sin, despising a cheap sin and a costly virtue; choosing to walk through the brainles of a desert, rather than to climb the fruit-trees of paradise.

7. Thirdly, Virtue conduces infinitely to the content of our lives, to secular felicities, and political satisfactions; and vice does the quite contrary. For the blessings of this life are those that make it happy by peace and quietness, content and satisfaction of desires, riches, love of friends and neighbours, honour and reputation abroad, a healthful body, and a long life. This last is a distinct consideration, but the others are proper to this title. For the first it is certain, peace was so designed by the Holy Jesus, that he framed all his laws in compliance to that design. He that returns good for evil, a soft answer to the asperity of his enemy, kindness to injuries, lessens the contention always, and sometimes gets a friend, and when he does not, he shames his enemy. Every little accident in a family to peevish and angry persons is the matter of a quarrel, and every quarrel discomposes the peace of the house, and sets it on fire, and no man can tell how far that may burn; it may be to a dissolution of the whole fabric. But whosoever obeys the laws of Jesus, bears with the infirmities of his relatives and society, seeks with sweetness to remedy what is ill, and to prevent what it may produce, and throws water upon a spark, and lives sweetly with his wife, affectionately with his children, providently and discreetly with his servants; and they all love the major-domo, and look upon him as their parent, their guardian, their friend, their patron, their proveditore. But look upon a person angry, peaceless and disturbed, when he enters upon his threshold, it gives an alarm to his house, and puts them to flight, or upon their defence: and the wife reckons the joy of her day is done; when he returns; and the chil-

dren inquire into their father's age, and think his life tedious; and the servants curse privately, and do their service as slaves do, only when they dare not do otherwise; and they serve him as they serve a lion, they obey his strength, and fear his cruelty, and despise his manners, and hate his person. No man enjoys content in his family but he that is peaceful and charitable, just and loving, forbearing and forgiving, careful and provident. He that is not so, his house may be his castle, but it is manned by enemies: his "house is built, not upon the sand," but upon the waves, and upon a tempest: the foundation is uncertain, but his ruin is not so.

8. And if we extend the relations of the man beyond his own walls, he that does his duty to his neighbour, that is, all offices of kindness, gentleness, and humanity, nothing of injury and affront, is certain never to meet with a wrong so great as is the inconvenience of a law-suit, or the contention of neighbours, and all the consequent dangers and inconvenience. Kindness will create and invite kindness; an injury provokes an injury. And since "the love of neighbours" is one of those beauties which Solomon did admire, and that this beauty is within the combination of precious things which adorn and reward a peaceable, charitable disposition: he that is in love with spiritual excellences, with intellectual rectitudes, with peace and with blessings of society, knows they grow amongst the rose-bushes of virtue and holy obedience to the laws of Jesus. And "for a good man some will even dare to die," and a sweet and charitable disposition is received with fondness, and all the endearments of the neighbourhood. He that observes how many families are ruined by contention, and how many spirits are broken by the care, and contumely, and fear, and spite, which are entertained as advocates to promote a suit of law, will soon confess that a great loss, and a peaceable quitting of a considerable interest, is a purchase and a gain, in

respect of a long suit and a vexatious quarrel. And still if the proportion rises higher, the reason swells, and grows more necessary and determinate. For if we would live according to the discipline of Christian religion, one of the great plagues which vex the world would be no more. That there should be no wars, was one of the designs of Christianity; and the living according to that institution which is able to prevent all wars, and to establish an universal and eternal peace, when it is obeyed, is the using the infallible instrument toward that part of our political happiness which consists in peace. This world would be an image of heaven, if all men were charitable, peaceable, just, and loving. To this excellency all those precepts of Christ which consist in forbearance and forgiveness do co-operate.

9. But the next instance of the reward of holy obedience and conformity to Christ's law is itself a duty, and needs no more but a mere repetition of it. We must be content in every state; and because Christianity teaches us this lesson, it teaches us to be happy: for nothing from without can make us miserable, unless we join our own consent to it, and apprehend it such, and entertain it in our sad and melancholic retirements. A prison is but a retirement, and opportunity of serious thoughts, to a person whose spirit is confined, and apt to sit still, and desires no enlargement beyond the ancles of the body, till the state of separation calls it forth into a fair liberty. But every retirement is a prison to a loose and wandering fancy, for whose wildness no precepts are restraint, no band of duty is confinement, who, when he hath broken the first hedge of duty, can never after endure any enclosure so much as in a symbol. But this precept is so necessary, that it is not more a duty than a rule of prudence, and in many accidents of our lives it is the only cure of sadness: for it is certain /that no providence less than divine can prevent

evil and cross accidents; but that is an excellent remedy to the evil, which receives the accident within its power, and takes out the sting, paring the nails, and drawing the teeth of the wild beast, that it may be tame, or harmless, and medicinal. For all content consists in the proportion of the object to the appetite: and because external accidents are not in our power, and it were nothing excellent that things happened to us according to our first desires, God hath by his grace put it into our own power to make the happiness, by making our desires descend to the event, and comply with the chance, and combine with all the issues of divine providence. And then we are nolle persons, when we borrow not our content from things below us, but make our satisfactions from within. And it may be considered, that every little care may disquiet us, and may increase itself by reflexion upon its own acts, and every discontent may discompose our spirits, and put an edge, and make afflictions poignant, but cannot take off one from us, but makes every one to be two. But content removes not the accident, but complies with it; it takes away the sharpness and displeasure of it, and by stooping down makes the lowest equal, proportionable, and commensurate. Impatience makes an ague to be a fever, and every fever to be a calenture, and that calenture may expire in madness. But a quiet spirit is a great disposition to health, and for the present does alleviate the sickness. And this also is notorious in the instance of covetousness. "The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have pierced themselves with many sorrows." Vice makes poor, and does ill endure it.

10. For he that in the school of Christ hath learned to terminate his desires when his needs are served, and to judge of his needs by the proportions of nature, hath nothing wanting towards riches. Virtue makes poverty become

rich, and no riches can satisfy a covetous man, or rescue him from the affliction of the worst kind of poverty. He only wants that is not satisfied. And there is great infelicity in a family where poverty dwells with discontent: there the husband and wife quarrel for want of a full table and a rich wardrobe; and their love, that was built upon false arches, sinks when such temporary supporters are removed; they are like two millstones, which set the mill on fire when they want corn. But we may easily suppose St. Joseph and the holy virgin-mother in Egypt poor as hunger, forsaken as banishment, disconsolate as strangers; and yet their present lot gave them no affliction, because the angel fed them with a necessary hospitality, and their desires were no larger than their tables, and their eyes looked only upwards, and they were careless of the future, and careful of their duty, and so made their life pleasant by the measures and discourses of divine philosophy. When Elisha stretched himself upon the body of the child, and laid hands to hands, and applied mouth to mouth, and so shrunk himself into the posture of commensuration with the child, he brought life into the dead trunk: and so may we, by applying our spirits to the proportions of a narrow fortune, bring life and vivacity into our dead and lost condition, and make it live till it grows bigger, or else returns to health and salutary uses.

11. And besides this philosophical extraction of gold from stones, and riches from the dungeon of poverty, a holy life does most generally procure such a proportion of riches which can be useful to us, or consistent with our felicity. For besides that the Holy Jesus hath promised all things which "our heavenly Father knows we need," (provided we do our duty) and that we find great securities and rest from care when we have once cast our cares upon God, and placed our hopes in his bosom; besides all this, the temperance, sobriety, and prudence of a

Christian is a great income, and by not despising it, a small revenue combines its parts till it grows to a heap big enough for the emissions of charity, and all the offices of justice, and the supplies of all necessities: whilst vice is unwary, prodigal, and indiscreet, throwing away great revenues as tributes to intemperance and vanity, and suffering dissolution and forfeiture of estates as a punishment and curse. Some sins are direct improvidence and ill-husbandry. I reckon in this number intemperance, lust, litigiousness, ambition, bribery, prodigality, gaming, pride, sacrilege, which is the greatest spender of them all, and makes a fair estate evaporate like camphire, turning it into nothing, no man knows which way. But what the Roman gave as an estimate of a rich man, saying, "He that can maintain an army is rich," was but a short account; for he that can maintain an army may be beggared by one vice, and it is a vast revenue that will pay the debt-books of intemperance or lust.

12. To these if we add that virtue is honourable, and a great advantage to a fair reputation, that it is praised by them that love it not, that it is honoured by the followers and family of vice, that it forces glory out of shame, honour from contempt, that it reconciles men to the fountain of honour, the Almighty God, who will "honour them that honour him;" there are but a few more excellences in the world required to make up the *rosary* of temporal felicity. And it is so certain that religion serves even our temporal ends, that no great end of state can well be served without it; not ambition, not desires of wealth, not any great design, but religion must be made its usher or support. If a new opinion be commenced, and the author would make a sect, and draw disciples after him, at least must be thought to be religious; which is a demonstration how great an instrument of reputation piety and religion is: and if the *pretence* will do us good offices

amongst men, the *reality* will do the same, besides the advantages which we shall receive from the Divine benediction. The "power of godliness," will certainly do more than the form alone. And it is most notorious in the affairs of the clergy, whose lot it hath been to fall from great riches to poverty, when their wealth made them less careful of their duty; but when humility and chastity and exemplary sanctity have been the enamel of their holy order, the people, like the Galatians, would "pull out their own eyes to do them benefit." And indeed God hath singularly blessed such instruments to the being the only remedies to repair the breaches made by sacrilege and irreligion. But certain it is, no man was ever honoured for that which was esteemed vicious. Vice hath got money, and a curse many times; and vice hath adhered to the instruments and purchases of honour: but among all nations whatsoever, those called honourable, put on the face and pretence of virtue. But I choose to instance in the proper cognizance of a Christian, humility, which seems contradictory to the purposes and reception of honour; and yet in the world nothing is a more certain means to purchase it. Do not all the world hate a proud man? And therefore what is contrary to humility, is also contradictory to honour and reputation. And when the apostle had given command, that "in giving honour we should one go before another," he laid the foundation of praises, and panegyrics, and triumphs. And as humility is secure against affronts and tempests of despite, because it is below them; so when, by employment or any other issue of Divine providence, it is drawn from its sheath and secrecy, it shines clear and bright as the purest and most polished metals. Humility is like a tree, whose root, when it sets deepest in the earth, rises higher, and spreads fairer, and stands surer, and lasts longer; every step of its descent is like a rib of iron combining its parts in unions indissoluble, and placing it in

the chambers of security. No wise man ever lost any thing by cession; but he receives the hostility of violent persons into his embrace, like a stone into a lap of wool, it rests and sits down soft and innocently; but a stone falling upon a stone makes a collision, and extracts fire, and finds no rest: and just so are two proud persons; despised by each other, contemned by all, living in perpetual dissonancies, always fighting against affronts, jealous of every person, disturbed by every accident, a perpetual storm within, and daily hissings from without.

13. Fourthly, Holiness and obedience is an excellent preservative of life, and makes it long and healthful. In order to which discourse, because it is new, material, and argumentative, apt to persuade men who prefer life before all their other interests, I consider many things. First, In the Old Testament a long and a prosperous life was the great promise of the covenant; their hopes were built upon it, and that was made the support of all their duty. "If thou wilt diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, I will put none of the diseases upon thee which I brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee." And more particularly yet, that we may not think piety to be security only against the plagues of Egypt, God makes his promise more indefinite and unconfined; "Ye shall serve the Lord your God, and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee, and will fulfil the number of thy days;" that is, the period of nature shall be the period of thy person, thou shalt live long, and die in a seasonable and ripe age. And this promise was so verified by a long experience, that by David's time it grew up to a rule, "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile. And the same argument was pressed by Solomon, who was an excellent philosopher, and well skilled in the natural and accidental

means of preservation of our lives. "Fear the Lord, and depart from evil: and it shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Length of days is in the right hand of wisdom: for she is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her." Meaning that the tree of life and immortality which God had planted in Paradise, and which if man had stood he should have tasted, and have lived for ever, the fruit of that tree is offered upon the same conditions, if we will keep the commandments of God, our obedience, like the tree of life, shall consign us to immortality hereafter by a long and a healthful life here. And therefore although in Moses's time the days of man had been shortened, till they came to "threescore years and ten, or fourscore years, and then their strength is but labour and sorrow;" (for Moses was author of that Psalm;) yet to shew the great privilege of those persons whose piety was great, Moses himself attained to one hundred and twenty years, which was almost double to the ordinary and determined period. But Enoch and Elias never died, and became great examples to us, that a spotless and holy life might possibly have been immortal.

14. I shall add no more examples, but one great conjugation of precedent observed by the Jewish writers, who tell us that in the second temple there were three hundred high priests, (I suppose they set down a certain number for an uncertain, and by three hundred they mean very many,) and yet that temple lasted but four hundred and twenty years; the reason of this so rapid and violent abscission of their priests being their great and scandalous impieties: and yet in the first temple, whose abode was within *ten* years as long as the second, there was a succession but of eighteen high priests; for they being generally very pious, and the preservers of their rites and religion against the schism of Jeroboam, and the defection of Israel, and the idolatry and irreligion of many of the

kings of Judah, God took delight to reward it with a long and honourable old age. And Balaam knew well enough what he said, when in his ecstasy and prophetic rapture he made his prayer to God, "Let my soul die the death of the righteous." It was not a prayer that his soul might be saved, or that he might repent at last; for repentance and immortality were revelations of a later date:* but he in his prophetic ecstasy seeing what God had purposed to the Moabites, and what blessings he had reserved for Israel, prays that he might not die, as the Moabites were like to die, with an untimely death, by the sword of their enemies, dispossessed of their country, spoiled of their goods, in the period and last hour of their nation: but let my soul die the death of the just, the death designed for the faithful Israelites; such a death which God promised to Abraham, that he should return to his fathers in peace, and in a good old age. For the death of the righteous is like the descending of ripe and wholesome fruits from a pleasant and florid tree; our senses entire, our limbs unbroken, without horrid tortures, after provision made for our children, with a blessing entailed upon posterity, in the presence of our friends, our dearest relative closing up our eyes and binding our feet, leaving a good name behind us. O let my soul die such a death: for this, in whole or in part, according as God sees it good, is the manner that the righteous die. And this was Balaam's prayer. And this was the state and condition in the Old Testament.

15. In the gospel the case is nothing altered. For besides that those austerities, rigours, and mortifications which are in the gospel advised or commanded respectively, are more salutary or of less corporeal inconvenience than a vicious

* This assertion is too unqualified. It is more like Warburton than Taylor. Dr. Graves has proved that immortality was not utterly unknown then: and repentance was never unknown.—Ed.

life of intemperance, or lust, or carefulness, or tyrant covetousness; there is no accident or change, to the sufferance of which the gospel hath engaged us, but in the very thing our *life* is carefully provided for, either in kind, or by a gainful exchange: "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it, and he that will save his life shall lose it." And although God, who promised long life to them that obey, did not promise that Himself would never call for our life, borrowing it of us, and repaying it in a glorious and advantageous exchange; yet this very promise of giving us a better life in exchange for this, when we exposed it in martyrdom, does confirm our title to this, this being the instrument of permutation with the other: for God obliging himself to give us another in exchange for this, when in cases extraordinary he calls for this, says plainly, that this is our present right by grace, and the title of the divine promises. But the promises are clear. For St. Paul calls children to the observation of the fifth commandment by the same argument which God used in the first promulgation of it. "Honour thy father and thy mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long upon the earth." For although the gospel be built upon better promises than the law, yet it hath the same too, not as its foundation, but as appendences and adjuncts of grace, and supplies of need. "Godliness hath the promise of this life, as well as of the life that is to come." That is plain. And although Christ revealed his Father's mercies to us in new expresses and great abundance; yet he took nothing from the world which ever did in any sense invite piety, or endear obedience, or co-operate towards felicity. And therefore the promises which were made of old are also presupposed in the new, and mentioned by intimation and implication within the greater. When our blessed Saviour in seven of the eight

beatitudes had instanced in new promises and rewards, as "heaven, seeing of God, life eternal;" in one of them, to which heaven is as certainly consequent as to any of the rest, he did choose to instance in a temporal blessing, and in the very words of the Old Testament; to shew, that that part of the old covenant which concerns morality, and the rewards of obedience, remains firm and included within the conditions of the gospel.

16. To this purpose is that saying of our blessed Saviour; "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;" meaning, that besides the natural means ordained for the preservation of our lives, there are means supernatural and divine. God's blessing does as much as bread: nay, it is "every word proceeding out of the mouth of God;" that is, every precept and commandment of God is so for our good, that it is intended as food and physic to us, a means to make us live long. And therefore God hath done in this as in other graces and issues evangelical, which he purposed to continue in his church for ever: he first gave it in miraculous and extraordinary manner, and then gave it by way of perpetual ministry. The Holy Ghost appeared at first like a prodigy, and with miracle; he descended in visible representations: expressing himself in revelations and powers extraordinary: but it being a promise intended to descend upon all ages of the church, there was appointed a perpetual ministry for its conveyance; and still, though without a sign or miraculous representment, it is ministered in confirmation, by imposition of the bishop's hands.* And thus also health and long life which by way of ordinary benediction is consequent to piety, faith, and obedience evangelical.

* That Taylor cordially believed this, is beyond all doubt whether he tested its truth by the *experience* of the confirmed is not certain. They can, however, judge from their own experience.—Ed.

was at first given in a miraculous manner; that so the ordinary effects, being at first confirmed by miraculous and extraordinary instances and manners of operation, might for ever after be confidently expected without any dubitation, since it was in the same manner consigned, as the whole religion was, by a voice from heaven, and a verification of miracles, and extraordinary supernatural effects. That the gift of healing, and preservation, and restitution of life, was at first miraculous, needs no particular probation. All the story of the gospel is one entire argument to prove it: and amongst the fruits of the spirit St. Paul reckons "gifts of healing, and government, and helps," or exterior assistances and advantages; to represent that it was intended the life of Christian people should be happy and healthful for ever. Now that this grace also descended afterwards in an ordinary ministry is recorded by St. James: "Is any man sick amongst you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;" that was then the ceremony, and the blessing and effect is still; for "the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." For it is observable, that the blessing of healing and recovery is not appendent to the anointing, but to the *prayer*, of the church;* to manifest, that the ceremony went with the first miraculous and extraordinary manner; yet that there was an ordinary ministry appointed for the daily conveyance of the blessing: the faithful prayers and offices of holy priests shall obtain life and health to such persons who are receptive of it, and in spiritual and apt dispositions. And when we see, by a continual flux of extraordinary benediction, that even some Christian princes are instruments of the spirit, not only in "the government, but

in the gifts of healing" too, as a reward for their promoting the just interests of Christianity; we may acknowledge ourselves convinced, that a holy life in the faith and obedience of Jesus Christ may be of great advantage for our health and life, by that instance to entertain our present desires, and to establish our hopes of life eternal.

17. For I consider that the fear of God is therefore the best antidote in the world against sickness and death, because it is the direct enemy to sin, which brought in sickness and death; and besides this, that God by spiritual means should produce alterations natural, is not hard to be understood by a Christian philosopher, take him in either of the two capacities. Secondly, For there is a rule of proportion, and analogy of effects, that if sin destroys not only the soul but the body also, then may piety preserve both, and that much rather: for if sin, that is, the effects and consequents of sin, "hath abounded, then shall grace superabound;" that is, Christ hath done us more benefit than the fall of Adam hath done us injury; and therefore the effects of sin are not greater upon the body, than are to be restored or prevented by a pious life. Thirdly, There is so near a conjunction between soul and body, that it is no wonder if God, meaning to glorify both by the means of a spiritual life, suffers spirit and matter to communicate in effects and mutual impresses. The flames of hell, whatsoever they are, torment accursed souls; and the stings of conscience vex and disquiet the body. Fourthly, And if we consider that in the glories of heaven, when we shall live a life purely spiritual, our bodies also shall be so clarified and made spiritual, that they also shall become immortal; that state of glory being nothing else but a perfection of the state of grace, it is not unimaginable but that the soul may have some proportion of the same operation upon the body as to conduce to its prolongation, as to an antepast of immortality.

* There is *fact* as well as fancy, in this argument. Life is not a capricious "vapour," however precarious it may seem. The Editor has endeavoured to prove this, in the first volume of "Manly Piety."

Fifthly, For since the body hath all its life from its conjunction with the soul, why not also the *perfection* of life according to its present capacity: that is, health and duration, from the perfection of the soul, I mean, from the ornaments of grace? And as the blessedness of the soul, (saith the philosopher,) consists in the speculation of honest and just things; so the perfection of the body and of the whole man consists in the practice, exercise, and operations of virtue.

18. But this problem in Christian philosophy is yet more intelligible, and will be reduced to certain experience, if we consider good life in union and concretion with particular, material, and circumstantiated actions of piety: for these have great powers and influences even in nature to restore health and preserve our lives. Witness the sweet sleeps of temperate persons, and their constant appetite; which Timotheus the son of Conon observed, when he dieted in Plato's academy with severe and moderated diet: "they that sup with Plato are well the next day." Witness the symmetry of passions in meek men, their freedom from the violence of enraged and passionate indispositions, the admirable harmony and sweetness of content which dwells in the retirements of a holy conscience: to which if we add those joys which they only understand truly who feel them inwardly, the joys of the Holy Ghost, the content and joys which are attending upon the lives of holy persons are most likely to make them long and healthful. "For now we live, (saith St. Paul,) if ye stand fast in the Lord." It would prolong St. Paul's life to see his ghostly children persevere in holiness; and if we understood the joys of it, it would do much greater advantage to ourselves. But if we consider a spiritual life abstractedly and in itself, piety produces our life, not by a natural efficiency, but by divine benediction. God gives a healthy and a long life as a reward and blessing to crown our piety

even before the sons of men: "for such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; but they that be cursed of him shall be cut off." So that this whole matter is principally to be referred to the act of God, either by ways of nature, or by instruments of special providence, rewarding piety with a long life. And we shall more fully apprehend this if, upon the grounds of scripture, reason, and experience, we weigh the contrary; "wickedness is the way to shorten our days."

19. Sin brought death in first; and yet man lived almost a thousand years. But he sinned more, and then death came nearer to him: for when all the world was first drowned in wickedness, and then in water, God cut him shorter by one half, and five hundred years was his ordinary period. And man sinned still, and had strange imaginations, and built towers in the air; and then about Peleg's time God cut him shorter by one half yet, two hundred and odd years was his determination. And yet the generations of the world returned not unanimously to God; and God cut him off another half yet, and reduced him to one hundred and twenty years. And by Moses' time one half of the final remanent portion was pared away, reducing him to threescore years and ten: so that, unless it be by special dispensation, men live not beyond that term, or thereabout. But if God had gone on still in the same method, and shortened our days as we multiplied our sins, we should have been but as an ephemeron, man should have lived the life of a fly or a gourd; the morning should have seen his birth, his life have been the term of a day, and the evening must have provided him of a shroud. But God seeing "man's thoughts were only evil continually," he was resolved no longer so to strive with him, nor destroy the kind, but punish individuals only and single persons: and if they sinned, or if they did obey regularly, their life should be proportionable. This God set down for his

rule, "evil shall slay the wicked person: and, he that keepeth the commandments keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his own ways shall die."

20. But that we may speak more exactly in this problem, we must observe that in Scripture *three* general causes of natural death are assigned, nature, providence, and chance. By these three I only mean the several manners of divine influence and operation. For God only predeterminates; and what is changed in the following events by divine permission, to this God and man in their several manners do co-operate. The saying of David concerning Saul, with admirable philosophy, describes the three ways of ending man's life. "David said furthermore, as the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall descend into battle and perish." The first is special providence. The second means the term of nature. The third is that which, in our want of words, we call chance or accident, but is in effect nothing else, but another manner of the divine providence. That in all these sin does interrupt and retrench our lives, is the subject of the following periods.

21. First, In nature sin is a cause of discriacies and distempers, making our bodies healthless and our days few. For although God hath prefixed a period to nature by an universal and antecedent determination, and that naturally every man that lives temperately, and by no supervening accident is interrupted, shall arrive thither: yet because the greatest part of our lives is governed by will and understanding, and there are temptations to intemperance and to violations of our health, the period of nature is so distinct a thing from the period of our *person*, that few men attain to that which God had fixed by his first law and preceding purpose, but end their days with folly, and in a period which God appointed them with anger, and a determination secondary, consequent, and acci-

dental. And therefore says David, "Health is far from the ungodly, for they regard not thy statutes." And to this purpose is that saying of Abenezra: "He that is united to God, the fountain of life, his soul, being improved by grace, communicates to the body an establishment of its radical moisture and natural heat, to make it more healthful, that so it may be more instrumental to the spiritual operations and productions of the soul, and itself be preserved in perfect constitution." Now how this blessing is contradicted by the impious life of a wicked person is easy to be understood, if we consider that from drunken surfeits come dissolution of members, head-aches, apoplexies, dangerous falls, fracture of bones, drenchings and dilution of the brain, inflammation of the liver, crudities of the stomach, and thousands more, which Solomon sums up in general terms; "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath redness of eyes? they that tarry long at the wine." I shall not need to instance in the sad and uncleanly consequence of lusts, the wounds and accidental deaths which are occasioned by jealousies, by vanity, by peevishness, vain reputation and animosities, by melancholy, and the despair of evil consciences; and yet these are abundant argument, that when God so permits a man to run his course of nature, that himself does not intervene by any extraordinary influence, or any special acts of providence, but only gives his ordinary assistance to natural causes, a very great part of men make their natural period shorter, and by sin make their days miserable and few.

22. Secondly, Oftentimes Providence intervenes, and makes the way shorter; God for the iniquity of man not suffering nature to take her course, but stopping her in the midst of her journey. Against this David prayed, "O my God, cut me not off in the midst of my days. But in this there is some variety. For God does it sometimes in mercy, sometimes in judgment.

“The righteous die, and no man regardeth; not considering that they are taken away from the evil to come.” God takes the righteous man hastily to his crown, lest temptation snatch it from him by interrupting his hopes and sanctity. And this was the case of the old world. For from Adam to the flood by the patriarchs were eleven generations, but by Cain’s line there were but eight, so that Cain’s posterity were longer-lived: because God, intending to bring the flood upon the world, took delight to rescue his elect from the dangers of the present impurity, and the future deluge. Abraham lived five years less than his son Isaac, it being (say the doctors of the Jews) intended for *mercy* to him, that he might not see the iniquity of his grandchild Esau. And this the church for many ages hath believed, in the case of baptized infants dying before the use of reason. For besides other causes in the order of divine Providence, one kind of *mercy* is done to them too; for although their condition be of a lower form, yet it is secured by that *timely* (shall I call it?) or untimely death. But these are cases *extra regular*: ordinarily and by rule God hath revealed his purposes of interruption of the lives of sinners to be in anger and judgment; for when men commit any signal and grand impiety, God suffers not nature to take her course, but strikes a stroke with his own hand. To which purpose I think it a remarkable instance which is reported by Epiphanius, that for three thousand, three hundred and thirty-two years, even to the twentieth age, there was not an example of a son that died before his father, but the course of nature was kept, that he who was first-born in the descending line did die first; (I speak of natural death, and therefore Abel cannot be opposed to this observation) that Terah, the father of Abraham, taught the people to make images of clay and worship them; and concerning him it was first remarked, that “Haran died before his father

Terah in the land of his nativity.” God by an unheard of judgment and a rare accident punishing his newly invented crime. And whenever such intercession of a life happens to a vicious person, let all the world acknowledge it for a judgment; and when any man is guilty of evil habits or unrepented sins, he may therefore expect it, because it is threatened and designed for the lot and curse of such persons. This is threatened to covetousness, injustice, and oppression. “As a partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not: so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.” The same is threatened to voluptuous persons in the highest caresses of delight; and Christ told a parable with the same design. The rich man said, “Soul, take thy ease; but God answered, O fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.” Zimri and Cozbi were slain in the trophies of their lust; and it was a sad story which was told by Thomas Cantipratanus: two religious persons tempted by each other in the vigour of their youth, in their very first pleasures and opportunities of sin were both struck dead in their embraces and posture of entertainment. God smote Jeroboam for his usurpation and tyranny, and he died. Saul died for disobedience against God, and asking counsel of a Pythonisse. God smote Uzziah with a leprosy for his profaneness; and distressed Ahaz sorely for his sacrilege; and sent a horrid disease upon Jehoram for his idolatry. These instances represent voluptuousness and covetousness, rapine and injustice, idolatry and lust, profaneness and sacrilege, as marked by the signature of exemplary judgments, to be the means of shortening the days of man; God himself proving the executioner of his own fierce wrath, I instance no more, but in the singular case of Hananiah the false prophet: “Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will cut thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because

thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord. That is the curse and portion of a false prophet, a short life, and a sudden death of God's own particular and more immediate infliction.

23. And thus also the sentence of the divine anger went forth upon criminal persons in the New Testament: witness the disease of Herod, Judas's hanging himself, the blindness of Elymas, the sudden death of Ananias and Sapphira, the buffetings with which Satan afflicted the bodies of persons excommunicate. Yea, the blessed sacrament of Christ's body and blood, which is intended for our spiritual life, if it be unworthily received, proves the cause of a natural death: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many are fallen asleep," saith St. Paul to the Corinthian church.

24. Thirdly, But there is yet another manner of ending man's life, by way of chance or contingency; meaning thereby the manner of God's providence and event of things, which is not produced by the disposition of natural causes, nor yet by any particular and special act of God; but the event which depends upon accidental causes, not so certain and regular as nature, not so conclusive and determined as the acts of decretory providence, but comes by disposition of causes irregular to events rare and accidental. This David expresses by "entering into battle:" and in this, as in the other, we must separate cases extraordinary and rare from the ordinary and common. Extra regularly, and upon extraordinary reasons and permissions, we find that holy persons have miscarried in battle. So the Israelites fell before Benjamin; and Jonathan, and Uriah, and many of the Lord's champions, fighting against the Philistines: but in these deaths as God served other ends of providence, so he kept to the good men that fell all the mercies of the promise, by giving them a greater blessing of event and compensation. In the more ordinary course of divine dispensation, they that prevaricate the

laws of God are put out of protection; God withdraws his special providence, or their tutelar angel, and leaves them exposed to the influences of heaven, to the power of a constellation, to the accidents of humanity, to the chances of a battle, which are so many and various, that it is ten thousand to one, a man in that case never escapes; and in such variety of contingencies there is no probable way to assure our safety, but by a holy life to *endear* the providence of God to be our guardian. It was a remarkable saying of Deborah, "the stars fought in their courses, or in their orbs, against Sisera." Sisera fought when there was an evil aspect or malignant influence of heaven upon him. For even the smallest thing that is in opposition to us is enough to turn the chance of a battle: that although it be necessary for defence of the godly that a special providence should intervene, yet to confound the *impious* no special act is requisite. * If God exposes them to the ill aspect of a planet, or any other casualty, their days are interrupted, and they die. And this is the meaning of the prophet Jeremiah; "be not ye dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them:" meaning, that God will overrule all inferior causes for the safety of his servants; but the wicked shall be exposed to chance and human accidents; and the signs of heaven, which of themselves do but signify, or at most but dispose and incline towards events, shall be enough to actuate and consummate their ruin.* And this is the meaning of that proverb of the Jews, "Israel hath no planet;" which they expounded to mean, if they observe the law, the planets shall not hurt them. God will overrule all their influences; but if they prevaricate and rebel, the least star in the firmament of heaven shall bid them battle, and overthrow them. A stone shall lie

* Whilst there is too much astrology in this passage, remember, that there is much less, and that little more pious, than is usually to be found amongst Taylor's contemporaries.—ED.

in a wicked man's way, and God shall so expose him to it, leaving him so unguarded and defenceless, that he shall stumble at it and fall, and break a bone, and that shall produce a fever, and the fever shall end his days. For not only every creature, when it is set on by God, can prove a ruin; but if we be not by the providence of God *defended* against it, we cannot behold the least atom in the sun without danger of losing an eye, nor eat a grape without fear of choking, nor sneeze without breaking a vein. And Arius, going to the ground, purged his entrails forth, and fell down upon the earth and died. Such and so miserable is the great insecurity of a sinner. And of this Job had an excellent meditation: "how oft is the candle of the wicked put out; and how oft cometh their destruction upon them; God distributeth sorrows in his anger. For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst? This is he that dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet."

25. I sum up this discourse with an observation that is made concerning the family of Eli, upon which, for the remissness of discipline on the father's part, and for the impiety and profaneness of his sons, God sent this curse, "All the increase of their house shall die in the flower of their age." According to that sad malediction, it happened for many generations, that the heir of the family died as soon as he begat a son to succeed him; till the family being wearied by so long a curse, by the counsel of Rabbi Johanan Ben Zachary, betook themselves universally to a sedulous and most devout meditation of the law, that is, to an exemplary devotion and strict religion: and then, the curse was turned into a blessing, and the line masculine lived to an honourable old age. For the doctors of the Jews said, that God often changes his purposes concerning the death of man, when the sick person is "liberal

in alms, or fervent in prayer, or changes his name," that is, gives up his name to God by the serious purposes and religious vows of holy obedience. "He that followeth after righteousness (alms it is in the vulgar Latin) and mercy findeth life;" that verifies the first; and the fervent prayer of Hezekiah is a great instance of the second: and all the precedent discourse, was intended for probation of the *third*, and proves that no disease is so deadly as a deadly sin; and the ways of righteousness are therefore advantages of health, and preservatives of life, (when health and life are good for us) because they are certain titles to all God's promises and blessings.

26. Upon supposition of these premises I consider, there is no cause to wonder, that tender persons and the softest women endure the violences of art and physic, sharp pains of caustics and cupping-glasses, the abscission of the most sensible part, for preservation of a mutilous and imperfect body: but it is a wonder that, when God hath appointed a remedy in grace apt to preserve nature, and that a dying unto sin should prolong our natural life, yet few men are willing to try the experiment; they will buy their life upon any conditions in the world but those which are the best and easiest: anything but religion and sanctity; although for so doing they are promised, that immortality shall be added to the end of a long life, to make the life of a mortal partake of the eternal duration of an angel, or of God himself.

27. Fifthly, The last testimony of the excellency and gentleness of Christ's yoke, the fair load of Christianity, is the reasonableness of it, and the unreasonableness of its contrary. For whatsoever the wisest men in the world in all nations and religions did agree upon as most excellent in itself, and of greatest power to make political, or future and immaterial felicities, all that and much more the holy Jesus adopted into his law: for they receiving sparks or single

irradiations from the regions of light, or else having fair tapers shining indeed excellently in representations and expresses of morality, were all involved and swallowed up into the body of light, the Sun of righteousness. Christ's discipline was the breviary of all the wisdom of the best men, and a fair copy and transcript of his Father's wisdom; and there is nothing in the laws of our religion but what is perfective of our spirits, excellent rules, and rare expedients of obeying God by the nearest ways of imitation, and such duties which are the proper ways of doing good to all capacities and orders of men. But I remember my design now, is not to represent Christianity to be a better religion than any other; for I speak to Christians, amongst whom we presuppose that: but I design to invite all Christians in name to be such as they are called, upon the interest of such arguments which represent the advantages of obedience to our religion as it is commanded us by God. And this I shall do yet farther, by considering, that those Christian names who apprehend religion as the fashion of their country, and know no other use of a church but customary, or secular and profane, that, supposing Christian religion to have come from God, as we all profess to believe, there are no greater *fools* in the world than such whose life conforms not to the pretence of their baptism and institution. They have all the signs and characters of fools, and indiscreet, unwary persons.

28. First, Wicked persons, like children and fools, choose the present, whatsoever it is, and neglect the infinite treasures of the future. They that have no faith nor foresight have an excuse for snatching at what is now represented, because it is all which can move them: but then such persons are infinitely distant from wisdom, whose understanding neither reason nor revelation hath carried farther than the present adherences; not only because they are narrow souls who cannot look forward, and have

nothing to distinguish them from beasts, who enjoy the present, being careless of what is to come; but also because whatsoever is present is not fit satisfaction to the spirit, being nothing but gluttings of the sense and sottish appetites. Moses was a wise person, and so esteemed and reported by the spirit of God, because "he despised the pleasures of Pharaoh's court, having an eye to the recompense of reward;" that is, because he despised all the present arguments of delight, and preferred those excellences which he knew should be infinitely greater, as well as he knew they should be at all. He that would have rather chosen to stay in the theatre and see the sports out, than quit the present spectacle upon assurance to be adopted into Cæsar's family, had an offer made him too great for a fool; and yet his misfortune was not big enough for pity, because he understood nothing of his felicity, and rejected what he understood not. But he that prefers moments before eternity, and despises the infinite successions of eternal ages, that he may enjoy the present, not daring to trust God for what he sees not, and having no objects of his affections but those which are the objects of his eyes, hath the impatience of a child, and the indiscretion of a fool, and the faithlessness of an unbeliever. The faith and hope of a Christian are the graces and portions of spiritual wisdom, which Christ designed as an *antidote* against this folly.

29. Secondly, Children and fools choose to please their senses rather than their reason, because they still dwell within the regions of sense, and have but little residence amongst intellectual essences. And because the needs of nature first employ our sensual appetites, these, being first in possession, would also fain retain it, and therefore for ever continue their title, and perpetually fight for it: but because the inferior faculty fighting against the superior is no better than a rebel, and that it takes

reason for its enemy, it shews such actions which please the sense and do not please the reason, to be unnatural, monstrous, and unreasonable. And it is a great disreputation to the understanding of a man, to be so cozened and deceived, as to choose money before a moral virtue; to please that which is common to him and beasts, rather than that part which is a communication of the divine nature; to see him run after a bubble which himself hath made, and the sun hath particoloured, and to despise a treasure, which is offered to him to call him off from pursuing that emptiness and nothing. But so does every vicious person; he feeds upon husks, and loathes manna; worships cats and onions, the beggarly and basest of Egyptian deities, and neglects to adore and honour the eternal God; he prefers the society of drunkards before the communion of saints; or the fellowship of harlots before a choir of pure, chaste, and immaterial angels; the sickness and filth of luxury before the health and purities of chastity and temperance; a dish of red lentil pottage before a benison; drink before immortality, money before mercy, wantonness before the severe precepts of Christian philosophy, earth before heaven, and folly before the crowns, and sceptres, and glories of a kingdom. Against this folly Christian religion opposes contempt of things below, and setting our affections on things above.

30. Thirdly, Children and fools propound to themselves ends silly, low and cheap, the getting of a nut-shell, or a bag of cherry-stones, a gaud to entertain the fancy of a few minutes; and in order to such ends direct their counsels and designs. And indeed in this they are innocent. But persons not living according to the discipline of Christianity are as foolish in the designation of *their* ends, choosing things as unprofitable and vain to themselves, and yet with many mixtures of malice and injuriousness both to themselves and others. His end

is to cozen his brother of a piece of land, or to disgrace him by telling of a lie, to supplant his fortune, to make him miserable: ends which wise men and good men look upon as miseries and persecutions, instruments of affliction and regret; because every man is a member of a society, and hath some common terms of union and conjuncture, which make all the body susceptible of all accidents to any part. And it is a great folly, for pleasing of the eye to snatch a knife which cuts our fingers; to bring affliction upon my brother or relative, which either must affect me, or else I am a useless, a base, or dead person. The ends of vice are ignoble and dishonourable: to discompose the quiet of a family, or to create jealousies, or to raise wars, or to make a man less happy, or apparently miserable, or to fish for the devil, and gain souls to our enemy, or to please a passion that undoes us, or to get something that cannot satisfy us; this is the chain of counsels. and the great aims of unchristian livers, they are all of them extreme great miseries. And it is a great indecency for a man to propound an end less and more imperfect than our present condition; as if we went about to unravel our present composure, and to unite every degree of essence and capacity, and to retire back to our first matter and unshapen state, hoping to get to our journey's end by going backwards. Against this folly the Holy Jesus opposed the fourth beatitude, or precept of "hungering and thirsting after righteousness."

31. Fourthly, But children and fools, whatever their ends be, they pursue them with as much weakness and folly as they first chose them with indiscretion; running to broken cisterns or to puddles to quench their thirst. When they are hungry, they make fantastic banquets, or put colicoquintida into their pottage, that they may be furnished with pot-herbs: or are like the ass that desired to flatter his master,

and therefore fawned upon him like a spaniel, and bruised his shoulders. Such indecencies of means and prosecutions of interests we find in unchristian courses. It may be men propound to themselves riches for their end, and they use covetousness for their means, and that brings nought home; or else they steal to get it, and they are apprehended, and made to restore fourfold. Like moths gnawing a garment they devour their own house, and by greediness of desire they destroy their content, making impatience the parent and instrument of all their felicity. Or they are so greedy and imaginative, and have raised their expectation by an over-valuing esteem of temporary felicities, that when they come they fall short of their promises, and are indeed less than they would have been, by being beforehand apprehended greater than they could be. If their design be to represent themselves innocent and guiltless of a suspicion or a fault, they deny the fact, and double it. When they would repair their losses they fall to gaming; and besides that they are infinitely full of fears, passions, wrath, and violent disturbances in the various chances of their game, that which they use to restore their fortune, ruins even the little remnant, and condemns them to beggary, or what is worse. Thus evil men seek for content out of things that cannot satisfy, and take care to get that content; that is, they raise war to enjoy present peace, and renounce all content to get it: they strive to depress their neighbours, that they may be their equals; to disgrace them, to get reputation to themselves; (which arts being ignoble do them the most disparagement,) and resolve never to enter into the felicities of God by content taken in the prosperities of man, which is a making ourselves wretched by being wicked. Malice and envy is indeed a mighty curse; and the devil can show us nothing more foolish and unreasonable than envy, which is in its very formality a curse, an

eating of coals and vipers, because my neighbour's table is full, and his cup is crowned with health and plenty. The Christian religion, as it chooseth excellent ends, so it useth proportionate and apt means. The most contradictory accident in the world, when it becomes hallowed by a pious and Christian design, becomes a certain means of felicity and content. To quit our lands for Christ's sake will certainly make us rich; to depart from our friends, will increase our relations and beneficiaries: but the striving to secure our temporal interests by any other means than obedient actions or obedient sufferings, is declared by the holy Jesus to be the greatest improvidence and ill-husbandry in the world. Even in this world Christ will repay us an hundred fold, for all our losses which we suffer for the interests of Christianity. In the same proportion we find, that all graces do the work of human felicities with a more certain power and infallible effect than their contraries. Gratitude endears benefits, and procures more friendships: confession gets a pardon; impudence and lying doubles the fault, and exasperates the offended person: innocence is bold, and rocks a man asleep; but an evil conscience is a continual alarm. Against this folly of using disproportionate means in order to their ends, the holy Jesus hath opposed the eight beatitudes, which by contradictions of nature and improbable causes, according to human and erring estimate, bring our best and wisest ends to pass infallibly and divinely.

32. But this is too large a field to walk in: for it represents all the flatteries of sin to be a mere cozenage and deception of the understanding; and we find by this scrutiny, that evil and unchristian persons are infinitely unwise, because they neglect the counsel of their superiors and their guides. They dote passionately upon trifles; they rely upon false foundations and deceiving principles; they are most

confident when they are most abused ; they are like shelled fish, singing loudest when their house is on fire about their ears, and being merriest when they are most miserable and perishing ; when they have the option of two things, they ever choose the worst ; they are not masters of their own actions, but break all purposes at the first temptation ; they take more pains to do themselves a *mischief* than would secure heaven : that is, they are rude, ignorant, foolish, unwary and undiscerning people in all senses and to all purposes ; and are incurable but by their obedience and conformity to the holy Jesus, the eternal wisdom of the Father.

33. Upon the strength of these premises the yoke of Christianity must needs be apprehended light, though it had in it more pressure than it hath : because lightness or heaviness being *relative* terms, are to be esteemed by comparison to others. Christianity is far easier than the yoke of Moses's law, not only because it consists of fewer rites, but also because those perfecting and excellent graces, which integrate the body of our religion are made easy by God's assisting, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost : and we may yet make it easier by love and by fear, which are the proper products of the evangelical promises and threatenings. For I have seen persons in affrightment carry burthens, and leap ditches, and climb walls, which their natural power could never have done. And if we understood the sadnesses of a cursed eternity, from which we are commanded to fly, and yet knew how near we are to it, and how likely to fall into it, it would create fears greater than a sudden fire, or a midnight alarm. And those unhappy souls who come to feel this truth, when their condition is without remedy, are made the more miserable by the apprehension of their stupid folly. For certainly the accursed spirits feel the smart of hell doubled upon them, by considering by what vain unsatisfying trifles they lost their happiness, with what pains they

perished, and with how great ease they might have been beatified. And certain it is Christian religion hath so furnished us with assistances, both exterior and interior, both of persuasion and advantages, that whatsoever Christ hath doubled upon us in perfection he hath alleviated in aids.

34. And then if we compare the state of Christianity with sin, all the preceding discourses were intended to represent how much easier it is to be a Christian, than a vile and wicked person. And he that remembers, that whatever fair allurements may be pretended as invitations to a sin, are such false and unsatisfying pretences, that they drive a man to repent him of his folly, and like a great laughter end in a sigh, and expire in weariness and indignation ; must needs confess himself a fool for doing that which he knows will make him *repent* that he ever did it. A sin makes a man afraid when it thunders, and in all dangers the sin detracts the visor, and affrights him and visits him when he comes to die, upbraiding him with guilt, and threatening misery. So that Christianity is the easiest law and the easiest state, it is more perfect and less troublesome ; it brings us to felicity by ways proportionable, landing us in rest by easy and unperplexed journeyes. This discourse I therefore thought necessary, because it reconciles our religion with those passions and desires which are commonly made the instruments and arguments of sin. For we rarely meet with such spirits which love virtue so metaphysically, as to abstract her from all sensible and delicious compositions, and love the purity of the idea. St. Lewis the king sent Ivo Bishop of Chartres on an embassy : and he told, that he met a grave matron on the way with fire in one hand, and water in the other ; and, observing her to have a melancholic, religious, and fantastic deportment and look, asked her what those symbols meant, and what she meant to do with

her fire and water. She answered, my purpose is with the fire to burn paradise, and with my water to quench the flames of hell, that men may serve God without the incentives of hope and fear, and purely for the love of God. Whether the woman were only imaginative and sad, or also zealous, I know not. But God knows he would have few disciples, if the arguments of invitation were not of greater promise than the labours of virtue are of trouble. And therefore the Spirit of God knowing to what we are inflexible, and by what we are made most ductile and malleable, hath propounded virtue clothed and dressed with such advantages as may entertain even our sensitive part and first desires, that those also may be invited to virtue who understand not what is just and reasonable, but what is profitable, who are more moved with advantage than justice. And because emolument is more felt than innocence, and a man may be poor for all his gift of chastity, the Holy Jesus, to endear the practices of religion, hath represented godliness unto us under the notion of gain, and sin as unfruitful: and yet besides all the natural and reasonable advantages, every virtue hath a supernatural reward, a gracious promise attending; and every vice is not only naturally deformed, but is made more ugly by a threatening, and horrid by an appendant curse. Henceforth therefore let no man complain that the commandments of God are impossible; for they are not only possible, but easy; and they that say otherwise, and do accordingly, take more pains to carry the instruments of their own death, than would serve to secure life to them. And if we would do as much for Christ as we have done for sin, we should find the pains less, and the pleasure more. And therefore such complainers are without excuse; for certain it is, they that can go in foul ways, must not say they cannot walk in fair: they that march over rocks in despite of so many impediments, can

travel the even ways of religion and peace, when the holy Jesus is their guide, and the Spirit is their guardian, and infinite felicities are at their journey's end, and all the reason of the world, political, economical, and personal, do entertain and support them in the travel of the passage.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal Jesus, who gavest laws unto the world, that mankind, being united to thee by the bands of obedience, might partake of all thy glories and felicities; open our understanding, give us the spirit of discerning, and just apprehension of all the beauties with which thou hast enamelled virtue, to represent it beauteous and amiable in our eyes; that by the allurements of exterior decencies and appendant blessings our present desires may be entertained, our hopes promoted, our affections satisfied, and love entering in by these doors may dwell in the interior regions of the will. O make us to love thee for thyself, and religion for thee, and all the instruments of religion in order to thy glory and our own felicities. Pull off the visors of sin, and discover its deformities by the lantern of thy word and the light of the Spirit, that I may never be bewitched with sottish appetites. Be pleased to build up all the contents I expect in this world upon the interests of a virtuous life, and the support of religion; that I may be rich in good works, content in the issues of thy providence, my health may be the result of temperance and severity, my mirth in spiritual emanations, my rest in hope, my peace in a good conscience, my satisfaction and acquiescence in thee: that from content I may pass into an eternal fulness, from health to immortality, from grace to glory,

walking in the paths of righteousness, by the waters of comfort, to the land of everlasting rest, to feast in the glorious communications of eternity, eternally adoring, loving and enjoying the infinity of the ever-blessed and mysterious Trinity; to whom be glory, and honour, and dominion now and for ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE XVI.

Of Certainty of Salvation.

1. WHEN the Holy Jesus took an account of the first legation and voyage of his apostles, he found them rejoicing in privileges and exterior powers, in their authority over unclean spirits: but weighing it in his balance, he found the cause too light, and therefore diverted it upon the right object; "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven." The revelation was confirmed and more personally applied in answer to St. Peter's question, "We have forsaken all and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?" Their Lord answered, "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Amongst these persons to whom Christ spake, Judas, was; he was one of the twelve, and he had a throne allotted for him; his name was described in the book of life, and a sceptre and a crown was deposited for him too. For we must not judge of Christ's meaning by the event, since he spake these words to produce in them faith, comfort, and joy, in the best objects: it was a sermon of *duty* as well as a homily of comfort; and, therefore, was equally intended to all the college: and since the number of thrones is proportioned to the number of men, it is certain there was no exception of any man there included; and yet it is as certain Judas never came to sit upon the throne, and his name was blotted out of the book of life.

Now if we put these ends together, that in Scripture it was not revealed to any man concerning his final condition, but to the dying penitent thief, and to the twelve apostles, that twelve thrones were designed for them, and a promise made of their enthronization, and yet that no man's final estate is so clearly declared miserable and lost as that of Judas, one of the twelve, to whom a throne was promised; the result will be, that the election of holy persons is a condition allied to duty, absolute and infallible in the general, and supposing all the dispositions and requisites concurring; but fallible in the particular, if we fall off from the mercies of the covenant, and prevaricate the conditions. But the thing which is most observable is, that if in persons so eminent and privileged, and to whom a revelation of their election was made as a particular grace, their condition had one weak leg, upon which because it did rely for one half of the interest, it could be no stronger than its supporters; the condition of lower persons, to whom no revelation is made, no privileges are indulged, no greatness of spiritual eminency is appendent, as they have no greater certainty in the thing, so they have less in person, and are therefore to "work out their salvation with great fears and tremblings of spirit."

2. The purpose of this consideration is, that we do not judge of our final condition by any discourses of our *own*, relating to God's secret counsels, and predestination of eternity. This is a mountain upon which whosoever climbs, like Moses, to behold the land of Canaan at great distances, may please his eyes, or satisfy his curiosity, but is certain never to enter that way. It is like enquiring into fortunes, concerning which Phavorinus the philosopher spake not unhandsomely; "They that foretel events of destiny and secret providence, either foretel sad things, or prosperous. If they promise prosperous, and deceive, you are made miserable

by a vain speculation. If they threaten ill fortune, and say false, thou art made wretched by a false fear. But if they foretel adversity, and say true, thou art made miserable by thy own apprehension before thou art so by destiny; and many times the fear is worse than the evil feared. But if they promise felicities, and promise truly what shall come to pass, then thou shalt be wearied by an impatience and a suspended hope, and thy hope shall ravish and deflower the joys of thy possession." Much of this is hugely applicable to the present question; and our blessed Lord, when he was petitioned that he would grant to the two sons of Zebedee, that they may sit one on the right hand and the other on the left in his kingdom, rejected their desire, and only promised them what concerned their duty and their suffering, referring them to that, and leaving the final event of men to the disposition of his Father. This is the great secret of the kingdom, which God hath locked up and sealed with the counsels of eternity. "The sure foundation of God standeth, having this seal, the Lord knoweth who are his." This seal shall never be broken up till the great day of Christ; in the mean time the divine knowledge is the only repository of the final sentences, and this "way of God is unsearchable and past finding out." And therefore if we be solicitous and curious to know what God in the counsels of eternity hath decreed concerning us, he hath in *two* fair tables described all those sentences from whence we must take accounts, the revelations of Scripture, and the book of conscience: the first recites the law and conditions; the other gives in evidence: the first is clear, evident and conspicuous; the other, when it is written with large characters, may also be discerned; but there are many little accents, periods, distinctions, and little significations of actions, which either are there written in water, or sullied over with carelessness, or blotted with forgetfulness, or not legible by ignorance, or miscon-

strued by interest and partiality, that it will be extremely difficult to read the hand upon the wall, or to copy out one line of the eternal sentence. And therefore excellent was the counsel of the son of Sirach, "Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength: but what is commanded thee, think thereupon with reverence; for it is not needful for thee to see with thine eyes the things that are in secret." For whatsoever God hath revealed in general concerning election, it concerns all persons within the pale of Christianity: he hath conveyed notice to all true believers, that they are the sons of God, that they are the heirs of eternity, "coheirs with Christ, partakers of the divine nature;" meaning, that such they are by the design of God, and the purposes of the manifestation of his Son. The election of God is disputed in Scripture to be an act of God separating whole nations, and rejecting others; in each of which many particular instances there were *contrary* to the general and universal purpose; and of the elect nations many particulars perished, and many of the rejected people "sat down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven:" and to those persons to whom God was more particular, and was pleased to shew the scrolls of his eternal counsels, and to reveal their particular elections, as he did to the twelve apostles, he shewed them wrapped up and sealed; and, to take off their confidences or presumptions, he gave probation in one instance that those scrolls may be cancelled, that his purpose concerning particulars may be altered by us; and therefore that he did not discover the bottom of the abyss, but some purposes of special grace and indefinite design. But his peremptory, final, unalterable decree he keeps in the cabinets of the eternal ages, never to be unlocked till the angel of the covenant shall declare the unalterable universal sentence.

3. But as we take the measure of the course

of the sun by the dimensions of the shadows made by our own bodies or our own instruments; so must we take the measures of eternity by the span of a man's hand, and guess at what God decrees of us, by considering how our relations and endearments are to him. And it is observable, that all the confidences which the Spirit of God hath created in the elect are built upon *duty*, and stand or fall according to the strength or weakness of such supporters. "We know we are translated from death to life by our love unto the brethren:" meaning, that the performance of our duty is the best consignment to eternity, and the only testimony God gives us of our election. And therefore we are to make our judgments accordingly.

4. But there is great variety of men, and difference of degrees; and every step of returning to God may reasonably add one degree of hope, till at last it comes to the certainty and top of hope. Many men believe themselves to be in the state of grace, and are not: many are in the state of grace and are infinitely fearful they are *out* of it: and many that are in God's favour do think they are so, and they are not deceived. And all this is certain. For some sin that sin of presumption and flattery of themselves, and some good persons are vexed with violent fears and temptations to despair; and all are not: and when their hopes are right, yet some are strong, and some are weak; for they that are well persuaded of their present condition have persuasions as different as are the degrees of their approach to holiness; and he that is at the highest hath also such abatements as are apt and proper for the conservation of humility and godly fear. "I am guilty of nothing, (saith St. Paul,) but I am not hereby justified;" meaning thus, though I be innocent for aught I know, yet God, who judges otherwise than we judge, may find something to reprove in me: "It is God that judges," that is, concerning my degrees of acceptance and hopes of glory. If

the person be newly recovering from a state of sin, because his state is imperfect, and his sin not dead, and his lust active, and his habit not quite extinct, it is easy for a man to be too hasty in pronouncing well. He is wrapt up in a cloak of clouds, hidden and encumbered; and his brightest day is but twilight, and his discernings dark, conjectural, and imperfect; and his heart is like a cold hand newly applied to the fire, full of pain, and whether the heat or the cold be strongest is not easy to determine; or like *middle* colours, which no man can tell to which of the extremes they are to be accounted. But according as persons grow in grace, so they may grow in confidence of their present condition. It is not certain they will do so; for sometimes the beauty of the tabernacle is covered with goats' hair and skins of beasts, and holy people do infinitely deplore the want of such graces, which God observes in them with great complacency and acceptance. Both these cases say, that to be certainly persuaded of our present condition is not a duty—sometimes it is not possible, and sometimes it is better to be otherwise. But if we consider this certainty as a blessing and a reward, there is no question but in a great and an eminent sanctity of life, there may also be a great confidence and fulness of persuasion that our present being is well and gracious, and then it is *certain* that such persons are not deceived. For the thing itself being sure, if the persuasion answers to it, it is needless to dispute of the degree of certainty and the manner of it. Some persons are heartily persuaded of their being reconciled; and of these some are deceived, and some are not deceived; and there is no *sign* to distinguish them, but by that which is "the thing signified:" a holy life, according to the strict rules of Christian discipline, tells what persons are confident, and who are presumptuous. But the certainty is reasonable in none but in old Christians, habitually holy persons, not in new converts, or

in lately lapsed people : for concerning them we find the Spirit of God speaking with clauses of restraint and ambiguity, a perhaps, and, who knoweth, and, “ peradventure the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee ;” God may have mercy on thee. But that God hath done so, they only have reason to be confident whom God hath blessed with a lasting continuing piety, and who have wrought *out* the habits of their precontracted vices.

5. But we find in Scripture many precepts given to holy persons, being in the state of grace, to secure their standing, and perpetuate their present condition. For, “ He that endureth unto the end, he (only) shall be saved,” (said our blessed Saviour :) and, “ he that standeth, let him take heed lest he fall :” and, “ Thou standest by faith ; be not high-minded, but fear :” and, “ Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” “ Hold fast that thou hast, and let no man take the crown from thee.” And it was excellent advice ; for one church had “ lost their first love,” and was likely also to lose their crown. And St. Paul himself, who had once entered within the veil, and seen unutterable glories, yet was forced to endure hardship, and to fight against his own disobedient appetite, and to do violence to his inclinations, for fear that, “ whilst he preached to others, himself should become a cast-away.” And since we observe in holy story that Adam and Eve fell in paradise, and the angels fell in heaven itself, stumbling on the very jewels which pave the streets of the celestial Jerusalem ; and in Christ’s family, one man for whom his Lord had prepared a throne turned devil ; and that in the number of the deacons it is said that one turned apostate, who had yet been a man full of the Holy Ghost : it will lessen our train, and decompose the gaieties of our present confidence, to think that our securities cannot be really distinguished from danger and uncertainties. For every man walks upon two legs : one is firm,

invariable, constant, and eternal ; but the other is his own. God’s promises are the objects of our faith ; but the events and final conditions of our souls, which are consequent to our duty, can at the best be but the objects of our hope. And either there must in this be a *less* certainty, or else faith and hope are not two *distinct* graces. God’s gifts and vocation “ are without repentance ;” meaning, on God’s part : but the very people concerning whom St. Paul used the expression were reprobate and cut off, and in good time shall be called again ; in the mean time many single persons perish. “ There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” God will look to that, and it will never fail ; but then they must secure the following period, and “ not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” “ Behold the goodness of God towards thee, (saith St. Paul) if thou continue in his goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” And if this be true concerning the whole church of the Gentiles, to whom the apostle then made the address, and concerning whose election the decree was public and manifest, that *they* might be cut off, and their abode in God’s favour was upon the condition of their perseverance in the faith ; much more is it true in single persons, whose election in particular is shut up in the abyss, and permitted to the condition of our faith and obedience, and the revelations of doomsday.

6. Certain it is that God hath given to holy persons “ the spirit of adoption,” enabling them to cry, “ Abba, Father,” and to account themselves for sons ; and by this “ spirit we know we dwell in him,” and therefore it is called in Scripture “ the earnest of the Spirit :” though at its first mission, and when the apostle wrote and used this appellative, the Holy Ghost was of greater signification, and a more visible earnest and endearment of their hopes, than it is to most of us since. For the visible sending of the Holy Ghost upon many believers in gifts, signs, and

prodigies, was infinite argument to make them expect events as great beyond that, as that was beyond the common gifts of men: just as miracles and prophecy, which are gifts of the Holy Ghost, were arguments of proof for the whole doctrine of Christianity. And this being a mighty verification of the great promise, the promise of the Father, was an apt instrument to raise their hopes and confidences concerning those other promises which Jesus made; the promises of immortality and eternal life, of which the present miraculous graces of the Holy Spirit were an earnest, and in the nature of a contracting penny: and still also the Holy Ghost, though in another manner, is "an earnest of the great price of the heavenly calling," the rewards of heaven; though not so visible, and apparent as at first, yet as certain and demonstrative, where it is discerned or where it is believed, as it is and ought to be in every person who does any part of his duty, because by the Spirit we do it, and without him we cannot. And since we either feel or believe the presence and gifts of the Holy Ghost to holy purposes, (for whom we receive voluntarily, we cannot easily receive without a knowledge of his reception) we cannot but entertain him as an argument of greater good hereafter, and an earnest-penny of the perfection of the present grace, that is, of the rewards of glory; glory and grace differing no otherwise, than as an earnest in part of payment does from the whole price, "the price of our high calling." So that the Spirit is an earnest, not because he always signifies to us that we are actually in the state of grace, but by way of argument or reflection; we know we do belong to God when we receive his Spirit; I say, we know by that testimony that we belong to God; that is, we are the people with whom God hath made a covenant, to whom he hath promised and intends greater blessings, to which the present gifts of the Spirit are in order. But all this is conditional, and is

not an immediate testimony of the certainty and future event; but of the event as it is *possibly* future, and may (without our fault) be reduced to act as certainly as it is promised, or as the earnest is given in hand. And this the Spirit of God oftentimes tells us in secret visitations and public testimonies: and this is that which St. Paul calls, "tasting of the heavenly gift, and partaking of the Holy Ghost, and tasting of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." But yet some that have done so have fallen away, and have "quenched the Spirit," and have given back the earnest of the Spirit, and contracted new relations, and God hath been their Father no longer, for they have done the works of the devil. So that if new converts be uncertain of their present state, old Christians are not *absolutely* certain they shall persevere. They are as sure of it as they can be of any future acts of theirs, which God hath placed in their own power. But this certainty cannot exclude all fear, till their charity be perfect; only according to the strength of their habits, so is the confidence of their abiding in grace.

7. Beyond this, some holy persons have degrees of persuasion superadded as largesses and acts of grace; God loving to bless one degree of grace with another, till it comes to a confirmation in grace, which is a state of salvation directly opposite to obduration; and as this is irremediable and irrecoverable, so is the other unalterable; as God never saves a person obdurate and obstinately impenitent, so he never loses a man whom he hath confirmed in grace. "whom he (so) loves, he loves unto the end;" and to others indeed he offers his persevering love, but if they will not entertain it with a persevering duty, they will not be beloved unto the end. But I insert this caution, that every man that is in this condition of a confirmed grace does not always know it; but sometimes God draws aside the curtains of peace, and

shews him his throne, and visits him with irradiations of glory, and sends him a little star to stand over his dwelling, and then again covers it with a cloud. It is certain concerning some persons, that they shall never fall, and that God will not permit them to the danger or probability of it; to such it is morally impossible: but these are but few, and themselves know it not as they know a demonstrative proposition, but as they see the sun, sometimes breaking from a cloud very brightly, but all day long giving necessary and sufficient light.

8. Concerning the *multitude* of believers this discourse is not pertinent, for they only take their own accounts by the imperfections of their own duty blended with the mercies of God: the cloud gives light on one side, and is dark upon the other; and sometimes a bright ray peeps through the fringes of a shower, and immediately hides itself, that we might be humble and diligent, striving forwards, and looking upwards, endeavouring our duty and longing after heaven. "working out our salvation with fear and trembling," and in good time "our calling and election may be assured," when we first, according to the precept of the apostle, "use all diligence." St. Paul, when he writ his first epistle to the Corinthians, was more fearful of being reprobate, and therefore he used exterior arts of mortification. But when he writ to the Romans, which was a good while *after*, we find him more confident of his final condition, "persuaded that neither height, nor depth, angel, nor principality, nor power could separate him from the love of God in Jesus Christ:" and when he grew to his latter end, when he wrote to St. Timothy, he was more confident yet, and declared that now a "crown of righteousness was certainly laid up for him," for now he had "fought the fight, and finished his course, the time of his departure was at hand." Henceforth he knew no more fear; his love was perfect as this state would

permit, and that "cast out all fear." According to this precedent, if we reckon our securities, we are not likely to be reproved by any words of scripture, or by the condition of human infirmity. But when the confidence *outruns* our growth in grace, it is itself a sin; though when the confidence is equal with the grace, it is of itself no regular and universal duty, but a blessing and a reward indulged by special dispensation, and in order to personal necessities or accidental purposes. For only so much hope is simply necessary as excludes despair, and encourages our duty, and glorifies God, and entertains his mercy; but that the hope should be without fear is not given but to the highest faith, and the most excellent charity, and to habitual, ratified, and confirmed Christians, and to them also with some variety. The sum is this: all that are in the state of beginners and imperfection, have a conditional certainty, changeable and fallible in respect of us, (for we meddle not with what it is in God's secret purposes;) changeable, I say, as their wills and resolutions. They that are grown towards perfection have more reason to be confident, and many times are so: but still although the strength of the habits of grace adds degrees of moral certainty to their expectation, yet it is but as their condition is, hopeful and promising, and of a moral determination. But to those few to whom God hath given confirmation in grace, he hath also given a certainty of condition, and therefore if that be revealed to them, their persuasions are certain and infallible. If it be not revealed to them, their condition is in itself certain, but their persuasion is not so, but, in the highest kind of hope, "an anchor of the soul sure and stedfast."*

* It is equally impossible to identify Taylor with Arminians or Calvinists: he revere^s Sovereignty too much for the former, and not enough for the latter.—Ed.

THE PRAYER.

O Eternal God whose counsels are in the great deep, and thy ways past finding out; thou hast built our faith upon thy promises, our hopes upon thy goodness, and hast described our paths *between* the waters of comfort and the dry barren land of our own duties and affections: we acknowledge that all our comforts derive from thee, and to ourselves we owe all our shame and confusion and degrees of desperation. Give us the assistances of the Holy Ghost to help us in performing our duty, and give us those comforts and visitations of the Holy Ghost which thou in thy infinite and eternal wisdom knowest most apt and expe-

dient to encourage our duties, to entertain our hopes, to alleviate our sadnesses, to refresh our spirits, and to secure our abode and constant endeavours in the strictnesses of religion and sanctity. Lead us, dearest God, from grace to grace, from imperfection to strength, from acts to habits, from habits to confirmation in grace, that we may also pass into the regions of comfort, receiving the earnest of the Spirit, and the adoption of sons; till by such a signature we be consigned to glory, and enter into the possession of the inheritance which we expect in the kingdom of thy Son, and in the fruition of the felicities of thee, O Gracious Father, God Eternal. Amen.

SECTION XIV.

OF THE THIRD YEAR OF THE PREACHING OF JESUS.

1. BUT Jesus knowing of the death of the Baptist, Herod's jealousy, and the envy of the Pharisees, retired into a desert place beyond the lake together with his apostles: for the people pressed so upon them, they had not leisure to eat. But neither there could he be hid, but great multitudes flocked thither also, to whom he preached many things. And afterwards because there were no villages in the neighbourhood, lest they should faint in their return to their houses, he caused them "to sit down upon the grass, and with five loaves of barley and two small fishes he satisfied five thousand men, besides women and children, and caused the disciples to gather up the fragments, which being amassed together filled twelve baskets." Which miracles had so much proportion to the understanding; and met so happily with the affections of the people, that they were convinced that this was the "Messiah who was to come into the world, and had a purpose to have taken him by force, and made him a king."

2. But he, that left his Father's kingdom to take upon him the miseries and infelicities of the world, fled from the offers of a kingdom, and their tumultuary election, as from an enemy; and therefore sending his disciples to the ship before towards Bethsaida, he ran into the mountains to hide himself, till the multitude should scatter to their several habitations; he in the mean time taking the opportunity of

that retirement for the advantage of his prayers. But when the apostles were far engaged in the deep, a great tempest arose, with which they were pressed to the extremity of danger and the last refuges, labouring in sadness and hopelessness, till "the fourth watch of the night," when in the midst of their fears and labour, "Jesus comes walking on the sea," and appeared to them, which turned their fears into affrightments; for they supposed it had been a spirit: but he appeased their fears with his presence, and manifestation who he was; which yet they desired to have proved to them by a sign. For "Simon Peter said unto him, Master, if it be thou, command me to come to thee on the waters." The Lord did so; and Peter throwing himself upon the confidence of his Master's power and providence, came out of the ship, and his fear began to weigh him down, and "he cried, saying, Lord save me. Jesus took him by the hand," reproved the timorousness of his faith, and "went with him into the ship:" where when they had worshipped him, and admired the divinity of his power and person, they presently "came into the land of Genesareth, the ship arriving at the port immediately; and all that were sick or possessed with unclean spirits were brought to him, and as many as touched the border of his garment were made whole."

3. At this time they whom Jesus had left on the other side of the lake had come as far as

Capernaum to seek him, wondering that he was there before them: but upon the occasion of their so diligent inquisition Jesus observes to them, "that it was not the divinity of the miracle that provoked their zeal, but the satisfaction they had in the loaves, a carnal complacency in their meal: and upon that intimation speaks of celestial bread, the divine nutriment of souls; and then discourses of the mysterious and symbolical manducation of Christ himself, affirming that he himself was 'the bread of life that came down from heaven,' that he would give his disciples 'his flesh to eat and his blood to drink,' and all this should be 'for the life of the world,' to nourish unto life eternal; so that without it a happy eternity could not be obtained." Upon this discourse "divers of his disciples (amongst whom St. Mark the Evangelist is said to be one, though he was afterwards recalled by Simon Peter) forsook him," being scandalized by their literal and carnal understanding of those words of Jesus, which he intended in a spiritual sense. For "the words that he spake" were not profitable in the sense of flesh and blood, but "they are spirit, and they are life," himself being the expounder, who best knew his own meaning.

4. When Jesus saw this great defection of his disciples from him, he turned him to the *twelve* apostles, and asked if they "also would go away. Simon Peter answered, Lord, whither shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life: and we believe and are sure thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Although this public confession was made by Peter in the name and confidence of the other apostles, yet Jesus told them that even amongst the *twelve* there was one devil; meaning Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed him." This he told them prophetically, that they might perceive the sad accidents which afterwards happened did not invade and surprise him in the disadvantages of ignorance or improvision,

but came by his own knowledge and providence.

5. Then came to him the Pharisees and some scribes which came from Jerusalem and Galilee, (for Jesus would not go to Judea, because the Jews laid wait to kill him) and quarrelled with him about certain impertinent, unnecessary rites, derived to them not by divine sanction, but "ordinances of man;" such as were "washing their hands oft when they eat, baptizing cups and platters, and washing tables and beds;" which ceremonies the apostles of Jesus did not observe, but attended diligently to the simplicity and spiritual holiness of their Master's doctrine. But, in return to their vain demands, Jesus gave them a sharp reproof for prosecuting these and many other traditions to the discountenance of divine precepts; for in particular they taught men to give to the *Corban*, and refused to supply the necessity of their parents, thinking it to be religion, though they neglected piety and charity. And again he thunders out woes and sadnesses against their impieties, for being curious of minutes, and punctual in rites and ceremonials, but most negligent and incurious of judgment and the love of God; for their pride, for their hypocrisy, for their imposing burthens upon others which themselves helped not to support; for taking away the key of knowledge from the people, obstructing the passages to heaven; for approving the acts of their fathers in persecuting the prophets. But for the question itself concerning washings, Jesus taught the people that no outward impurity did stain the soul in the sight of God; but all pollution is from within, from the corruption of the heart, and impure thoughts, unchaste desires, and unholy purposes, and that charity is the best purifier in the world.

6. And thence "Jesus departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into a house, that he might not be known." The

diligence of a mother's love, and sorrow, and necessity, found him out in his retirement; for "a Syrophenician woman came and besought him that he would cast the devil out of her daughter." But Jesus discoursed to her by way of discomfort and rejection of her, for her nation's sake. But the seeming denial did but enkindle her desires, and made her importunity more bold and undeniable; she begged but "some crumbs that fell from the childrens' table," but one instance of favour to her daughter, which he poured forth without measure upon the sons and daughters of Israel. Jesus was pleased with her zeal and discretion, and pitied her daughter's infelicity, and dismissed her with saying, "the devil was gone out of her daughter."

7. Jesus stayed not long here; but returning "to the sea of Galilee through the midst of Decapolis, they brought unto him a man deaf and dumb, whom Jesus cured by touching his tongue, and putting his fingers in his ears:" which caused the people to give a large testimony in approbation of all his actions. And they followed him unto a mountain, bringing to him multitudes of diseased people, and he healed them all. But because the people had followed him "three days, and had nothing to eat," Jesus in pity to their need resolved to feast them once more at the charge of a miracle: therefore taking "seven loaves and a few small fishes, he blessed them, and satisfied four thousand men women and children. And there remained seven baskets full of broken bread and fish." From whence Jesus departed by ship to the coasts of Mageddon and Dalmanutha, whither "the Pharisees and Sadduces came, seeking of him a sign." But Jesus rejected their impertinent and captious demand, knowing they did it to ill purposes and with disaffection; reproving them, that they "discerned the face of the sky, and the prognostics of fair or foul weather, but not the signs of the

times of the Son of man." However, since they had neglected so great demonstrations of miracles, gracious discourses, holy laws and prophecies, they must expect "no other sign but the sign of the prophet Jonah;" meaning, the resurrection of his body after three days burial: and so he dismissed the impertinent inquisitors.

8. And passing again over the lake, as his disciples were solicitous because "they had forgot to take bread, he gave them caution to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadduces, and the leaven of Herod;" meaning, the hypocrisy and vanities of the one, and the heresy of the other. For Herod's leaven was the pretence that he was the Messiah, which the sect of the Herodians did earnestly and spitefully promote.* And after this entertainment of themselves by the way, they came together to Bethsaida, where Jesus cured a blind man with a collyrium of spittle, salutary as balsam or the purest eye-bright, when his divine benediction had hallowed it. But Jesus staid not there, but departing thence into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, out of Herod's power, (for it was in Philip's jurisdiction,) after he had "prayed with his disciples, he inquired what opinion the world had of him, and whom they reported him to be. They answered, some say thou art John the Baptist, some that thou art Elias, or Jeremiah, or one of the prophets:" for in Galilee especially the sect of the Pharisees was mightily disseminated; whose opinion it was, that the souls of dead men according to their several merits did *transmigrate* into other bodies of very perfect and excellent persons. And therefore in all this variety none hit upon the right, or fancied him to be a distinct person from the ancients; but although they differed in the assignation of his name, yet generally

* Taylor thus repeats this tradition. His references to authorities, however, confined to names: he gives no clue to pages or books.—Ed.

they agreed it was the soul of a departed prophet which had passed into another body. But Jesus asked the apostles their opinion; and Peter, in the name of all the rest, made an open and confident confession, thou art Christ; the Son of the living God.

9. This confession Jesus not only confirmed as true, but as revealed by God, and of fundamental necessity: for after the blessing of Peter's person, upon allusion of Peter's name, Jesus said, "that upon this rock (the article of Peter's confession) he would build his church," promising it assistances even to perpetuity, inasmuch that "the gates of hell, that is, persecution, and death, and the grave, should never prevail against it: adding withal a promise to Peter, in behalf of all the rest, as he had made a confession for them all, that he would give unto him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, so that whatsoever he should bind on earth should be bound in heaven, and whatsoever he should loose on earth should be loosed in heaven;" a power which he never communicated before or since, but to their successors: a greater than the large charter of nature and the donative of creation, in which all the creatures under heaven were made subject to man's empire, but till now heaven itself was never subordinate to human ministration.

10. And now the days from henceforward to the death of Jesus we must reckon to be like the vigils or eves of his passion; for now he began and often did ingeminate sad predictions of the unhandsome usage he should shortly find; that he should be "rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and suffer many things at Jerusalem, and be killed, and be raised up the third day." But Peter, hearing that sad discourse so contrary to his hopes, which he had blest with temporal expect-

ances, (for he had learned the doctrine of Christ's advent, but not the mystery of the cross,) in great and mistaken civility "took Jesus aside, and began to rebuke him, saying, be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee." But Jesus full of zeal against so soft and human admonition, that savoured nothing of God or of abstracted immaterial considerations, chid Peter bitterly; "get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me." And calling his disciples to him, told them a second part of a sad doctrine, that not only himself, but all they also must suffer. For when the head was to be crowned with thorns, if the members were wrapt in softnesses, it was an unhandsome undecency, and a disunion too near an antipathy; and therefore whoever will be the disciple of Jesus must "take up his cross, deny himself" and his own fonder appetites, and trace his Master's footsteps marked out with blood that he shed for our redemption and restitution. And that there might be no escape from the participation of Christ's suffering, Jesus added this dilemma; "he that will save his life shall lose it; and he that will lose it shall save it to eternity. Which part soever we choose, there is a life to be lost: but as the first are foolish to the extremest misery, that will lose their souls to gain the world; so they are most wise and fortunate that will give their lives for him; because when the Son of Man shall come in his own glory, and his Father's, and of his angels' he shall reward every man according to his works." This discourse Jesus concluded with a prophecy, "that some standing in that presence should not die till they saw the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

11. Of the greater glories, in due time to be revealed, Jesus after eight days gave a bright and excellent specimen. For "taking with him Peter, and James, and John, he went up into the mountain Tabor to pray; and while he prayed, he was transfigured before them, and

* Who are so? If the Romish priesthood, why are we protestants? If not, where is the snatched? The goal of it is better than this dilemma.—ED.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

his face did shine like the sun, and his garments were white and glistening. And there appeared talking with him Moses and Elias gloriously, speaking of the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem, which glory these apostles, after they had awaked from sleep, did behold." And the interlocutors with Jesus having finished their embassy of death, (which they delivered in forms of glory representing the excellences of the reward, together with the sharpness of the passage and interval) departed, leaving the apostles full of fear, and wonder, and ecstasy, inasmuch that "Peter talked he knew not what," but nothing amiss, something prophetic, saying, "Master, it is good to be here; let us build three tabernacles." And some devout persons in memory of the mystery did erect three churches in the same place in after-ages. But after the departure of those attendant saints, "a cloud encircled Jesus and his disciples, and a voice came from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, hear him." The cloud quickly disappeared, and freed the disciples from the fear it had put them in. So they attended Jesus, and "descended from the mountain, being commanded silence, which they observed till the resurrection."

12. The next day came to Jesus a man praying in behalf of his son, "Lunatic and sore troubled with a devil, who sought oft to destroy him in fire and water," that Jesus would be pleased to deliver him. For his apostles tried, and could not by reason of the want of faith; for this grace, if it be true, though in a less degree, is of power to remove mountains, to pluck up trees by the roots, and to give them solid foundation in the waters. "And Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him from that very hour." Thence Jesus departed privately into Galilee, and in his journey repeated those sadnesses of his approaching passion: which so afflicted the spirits of the disciples, that they durst no more induce him to

discourse, lest he should take occasion to interweave something of that unpleasant argument with it. For sad and disconsolate persons use to create comforts to themselves by fiction of fancy, and use arts of avocation to remove displeasure from them, and stratagems to remove it from their presence, by removing it from their apprehensions, thinking the incommodity is taken away, when they have lost the sense.

13. "When Jesus was now come to Capernaum, the exactors of rates came to Simon Peter," asking him if his master paid the accustomed imposition, viz. a sicle or didrachm, the fourth part of an ounce of silver, which was the tribute which the Lord imposed upon all the sons of Israel from twenty years old and above, to pay for redemption and propitiation, and for the use of the tabernacle. "When Peter came into the house," Jesus knowing the message that he was big with, prevented him, by asking him, "Of whom do the kings of the nations take tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter answered, of strangers." Then "said Jesus, then are the children free;" meaning, that since the Gentile kings do not exact tribute of their sons, neither will God of his. And therefore this pension to be paid for the use of the tabernacle, for the service of God, for the redemption of their souls, was not to be paid by him, who was the Son of God, but by strangers. "Yet to avoid offence," he sent Peter a-fishing, and provided a fish with two didrachms of silver in it, which he commanded Peter to pay for them two.

14. But when the disciples were together with "Jesus in the house, he asked them what they discoursed of upon the way;" for they had fallen upon an ambitious and mistaken quarrel, "which of them should be the greatest in their master's kingdom," which they still did dream, should be an external and secular royalty, full of fancy and honour. But the master was diligent to check their forwardness, establishing a rule for

clandestine deportment; "He that will be greatest among you, let him be your minister:" so supposing a greater and a lesser, a minister and a person to be ministered unto, but superuling the grandeur of the person from the greatness of office, that the higher the employment is, the more humble should be the man;) because in spiritual prelation it is not as in secular pomps, where the dominion is despotic, the coercion bloody, the dictates imperious, the laws externally compulsory, and the titles arrogant and vain; and all the advantages are so passed upon the person, that making that first to be splendid, it passes from the person to the subjects, who in abstracted essences do not easily apprehend regalities in veneration, but as they are subjected in persons made excellent by such superstructures of majesty: but in dignities ecclesiastical the dominion is paternal, the regiment persuasive and argumentative, the coercion by censures immaterial, by cession and consent, by denial of benefits, by the interest of virtues, and the efficacy of hopes, and impresses upon the spirit; the laws are full of admonition and sermon; the titles of honour monitors of duty, and memorials of labour and offices: and all the advantages, which from the office usually pass upon the person, are to be divested by the humility of the man; and when they are of greatest veneration they are abstracted excellences and immaterial, not passing through the person to the people, and reflected to his lustre, but transmitted by his labour and ministry, and give him honour for his labour's sake, (which is his personal excellency) not for his honour and title, which is either a derivative from Christ, or from the constitution of pious persons, estimating and valuing the relatives of religion.

15. Then "Jesus taketh a little child, and setteth him in the midst," propounding him by way of emblem as a pattern of humility and simplicity, without the mixtures of ambition or caltive distemper; such infant candour and

lowliness of spirit being the necessary port through which we must pass, if we will enter into the courts of heaven. But as a current of wholesome waters breaking from its restraint runs out in a succession of waters, and every preceding draught draws out the next: so were the discourses of Jesus excellent and opportune, creating occasions for others, that the whole doctrine of the gospel and the entire will of the Father might be communicated upon design; even the chances and words and actions being made regular and orderly by divine Providence. For from the instance of humility in the symbol and hieroglyphic of the child, Jesus discourses of "the care God takes of little children, whether naturally or spiritually such; the danger of doing them scandal and offences; the care and power of their angelic guardians, of the necessity in the event that scandals should arise, and of the great woe and infelicity of those persons who were the active ministers of such offences."

16. But if in the traverses of our life, discontentments and injuries be done, Jesus teaches how the injured person should demean himself. First, reprove the offending party privately; if he repent, forgive him for ever with a mercy as unwearied and as multiplied as his repentance. For the servant to whom his lord had forgiven ten thousand talents, because he refused to forgive his fellow-servant one hundred pence, was delivered to the tormentors, till he should pay that debt which his lord once forgave, till the servant's impiety forced him to repent his donative and remission. But if he refuses the charity of private correction, let him be reprov'd before a few witnesses: and in case he be still incorrigible, let him be brought to the tribunal of the church; against whose advices if he shall kick, let him feel her power, and be cut off from the communion of saints, becoming a pagan or a publican. And to make, that the church shall not have a dead and ineffectual

hand in her animadversions, Jesus promises to all the apostles, what before he promised to Peter, a power of "binding and loosing on earth," and that it should be "ratified in heaven" what they shall so dispose on earth with an unerring key.

17. But John interrupted him, telling him of a stranger that "cast out devils in the name of Jesus," but because he was not of the family, he had "forbidden him." To this Jesus replied, that he should "in no wise have forbidden him," for in all reason he would do veneration to that person whose name he saw to be energetical and triumphant over devils, and in whose name it is almost necessary that a man should believe, who used it as an instrument for the ejection of impure spirits. Then Jesus proceeded in his excellent sermon and union of discourses, adding holy precepts "concerning offences which a man might do to himself; in which case he is to be severe, though most gentle to others. For in his own case he must shew no mercy, but abscission: for it is better to 'cut off the offending hand or foot,' or 'extinguish the offending eye,' rather than upon the support of a troublesome foot, and by the light of an offending eye, walk into ruin and a sad eternity, 'where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'"^{*} And so Jesus ended this chain of excellent discourses.

18. About this time was the Jews' feast of tabernacles, whither Jesus went up as it were in secret, and passing through Samaria he found the inhabitants of a little village so inhospitable, as to refuse to give him entertainment; which so provoked the intemperate zeal of James and John, that they would fain have "called for fire to consume them, even as Elias did. But Jesus rebuked" the furies of their anger, teaching them to distinguish the spirit of Christianity from the ungentleness of the decretory zeal of Elias. For since "the Son of man came" with a purpose "to seek and save

what was lost," it was but an indiscreet temerity suddenly upon the slightest umbrages of displeasure to destroy a man, whose redemption cost the effusion of the dearest blood from the heart of Jesus. But contrariwise Jesus does a miracle upon the ten leprous persons which came to him from the neighbourhood, crying out with sad exclamations for help. But Jesus sent them to the priest to offer for their cleansing. Thither they went, and but "one only returned to give thanks, and he a stranger, who with a loud voice glorified God," and with humble adoration worshipped, and gave thanks to Jesus.

19. When Jesus had finished his journey, and was now come to Jerusalem, for the first days he was undiscerned in public conventions, but heard of the various opinions of men concerning him: "some saying he was a good man, others, that he deceived the people;" and the Pharisees sought for him to do him a mischief. But when they despaired of finding him in the midst of the feast and the people, he made sermons openly in the midst of the temple; whom, when he had convinced by the variety and divinity of his miracles and discourses, they gave the greatest testimony in the world of human weakness, and how prevalent a *prejudice* is above the confidence and conviction of a demonstration. For a proverb, a mistake, an error in matter of circumstance did in their understandings outweigh multitudes of miracles and arguments; and because "Christ was of Galilee," because "they knew whence he was," because of the proverb, that "out of Galilee comes no prophet," because "the rulers did not believe in him," these outweighed the demonstrations of his mercy, and his power, and divinity. But yet "very many believed on him; and no man durst lay hands to take him; for as yet his time was not come," in which he meant to give himself up to the power of the Jews: and therefore when the

Pharisees sent officers to seize him, they also became his disciples, being themselves surprised by the excellency of his doctrine.

20. After this "Jesus went to the mount of Olivet" on the east of Jerusalem, and "the next day returned again into the temple, where the scribes and Pharisees brought him a woman taken in the act of adultery," tempting him to give sentence, that they might accuse him of severity or intermeddling if he condemned her, or of remissness and popularity if he did acquit her. But Jesus found out an expedient for their difficulty, and changed the scene, by bidding "the innocent person among them cast the first stone at the adulteress; and then stooping down" to give them fair occasion to withdraw, "he wrote upon the ground with his finger," whilst they left the woman and her crime to a more private censure: "Jesus was left alone, and the woman in the midst;" whom Jesus dismissed, charging her to "sin no more." And a while after Jesus begins again to discourse to them "of his mission from the Father, of his crucifixion and exaltation from the earth, of the reward of believers, of the excellency of truth, of spiritual liberty and relations, who are the sons of Abraham, and who the children of the devil, of his own eternal generation, of the desire of Abraham to see his day." In which sermon he continued, adding still new excellences, and confuting their malicious and vainer calumnies, till they, that they also might confute him, "took up stones to cast at him; but he went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."

21. But in his passage he met a man who had been born blind; and after he had discoursed cursorily of the cause of that blindness, it being a misery not sent as a punishment to "his own or his parents' sin," but as an occasion to make public "the glory of God;" he, to manifest that himself was "the light of the world" in all senses, said it now, and proved it

by a miracle: for sitting down "he made clay of spittle, and anointing the eyes of the blind man, bid him go wash in Siloam;" which was a pool of limpid water which God sent at the prayer of Isaiah the prophet, a little before his death, to satisfy the necessities of his people oppressed with thirst and a strict siege, and it stood at the foot of the mount Sion, and gave its water at first by returns and periods, always to the Jews, but not to the enemies. And those intermitted springings were still continued, but only a pool was made from the frequent effluxes. The blind man "went, and washed, and returned seeing;" and was incessantly vexed by the Pharisees, to tell them the manner and circumstances of the cure: and when the man had averred the truth, and named his physician, giving him a pious and charitable testimony, the Pharisees, because they could not force him to disavow his good opinion of Jesus, "cast him out of the synagogue." But Jesus meeting him received him into the church, told him he was CHRIST; and the man became again enlightened, and he "believed, and worshipped." But the Pharisees blasphemed. For such was the dispensation of the divine mysteries, that the blind should see, and they which think they see clearly should become blind, because they had not the excuse of ignorance to lessen or take off the sin, but in the midst of light they shut their eyes, and doted upon darkness, and "therefore did their sin remain."

22. But Jesus continued his sermon among the Pharisees, insinuating reprehensions in his dogmatical discourses, which like light shined and discovered error. For by discoursing "the properties of a good shepherd, and the lawful way of intromission, he proved them to be thieves and robbers, because they refused to enter in by Jesus, who is the door of the sheep; and upon the same ground reproved all those false Christs which before him usurped the title of

Messiah, and proved his own vocation and office by an argument which no other shepherd would use, because he laid down his life for his sheep: others would take the fleece and eat the flesh, but none but himself would die for his sheep; but he would first die, and then gather his sheep together into one fold, (intimating the calling of the Gentiles;) to which purpose he was enabled by his Father to lay down his life, and to take it up; and had also endeared them to his Father, that they should be preserved unto eternal life, and no power should be able to take them out of his hand, or the hand of his Father: for because Jesus was united to the Father, the Father's care preserved the Son's flocks."

23. But the Jews, to requite him for his so divine sermons, betook themselves to their old argument, "they took up stones again to cast at him," pretending he had blasphemed: but Jesus proved it to be no blasphemy to call himself "the Son of God," because "they to whom the word of God came are" in Scripture "called gods." But nothing could satisfy them, whose temporal interest was concerned not to consent to such doctrine as would save their souls by ruining their temporal concerns. But when "they sought again to take him, Jesus escaped out of their hands, and went away beyond Jordan, where John at first baptized:" which gave the people occasion to remember that "John did no miracle," but this man does many, and John, whom all men did revere and highly account of for his office and sanctity, gave testimony to Jesus. "And many believed on him there."

24. After this, Jesus, knowing that "the harvest was great, and as yet the labourers had been few, sent out seventy-two" of his disciples with the like commission as formerly the twelve apostles, that they might "go before to those places whither himself meant to come." Of which number were the seven, whom afterwards the apostles set over the widows, and Matthias,

Mark, and some say Luke, Justus, Barnabas, Apelles, Rufus, Niger, Cephas, (not Peter,) Thaddæus, Aristion, and John. The rest of the names could not be recovered by the best diligence of Eusebius and Epiphanius. But when they returned from their journey, "they rejoiced" greatly in the legation and power, and Jesus also "rejoiced in spirit," giving glory to God, that he had "made his revelations to babes" and the more imperfect persons; like the lowest valleys which receive from heaven the greatest floods of rain and blessings, and stand thick with corn and flowers, when the mountains are unfruitful in their height and greatness.

25. And now a doctor of the law came to Jesus, asking him a question of the greatest consideration that a wise man could ask, or a prophet answer; "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus referred him to the Scriptures, and declared the way to heaven to be this only, "to love the Lord with all our powers and faculties, and our neighbour as ourself." But when the lawyer being captious made a scruple in a smooth rush, asking what is meant by "neighbour:" Jesus told him by a parable of a traveller fallen into the hands of robbers, and neglected by a priest and by a Levite, but relieved by a Samaritan, that no distance of country or religion destroys the relation of neighbourhood; but every person with whom we converse in peace and charity is that neighbour whom we are to love as ourselves.

26. Jesus having departed from Jerusalem upon the forementioned danger, came to a village called Bethany, where Martha making great and busy preparation for his entertainment, to express her joy and her affections to his person, desired Jesus to dismiss her sister Mary from his feet, who sat there, fastening herself with the viands and sweetnesses of his doctrine, incurious of the provisions for entertainment. But Jesus commended her choice;

and though he did not expressly disrepute Martha's civility, yet he preferred Mary's religion and sanctity of affections. In this time (because "the night drew on, in which no man could work") Jesus hastened to do his Father's business, and to pour out whole cata-racts of holy lessons, like the fruitful Niles' swelling over the banks, and filling all the trenches, to make a plenty of corn and fruits great as the inundation. Jesus therefore teaches his disciples "that form of prayer the second time, which we call 'the Lord's prayer:' teaches them assiduity and indefatigable importunity in prayer, by a parable of an importunate neighbour borrowing loaves at midnight, and a troublesome widow who forced an unjust judge to do her right by her clamorous and hourly addresses: encourages them to pray, by consideration of the divine goodness and fatherly affection, far more indulgent to his sons than natural fathers are to their dearest issue; and adds a gracious promise of success to them that pray. He reproves pharisaical ostentation; arms his disciples against the fear of men and the terrors of persecution, which can arrive but to the incommodities of the body; teaches the fear of God, who is Lord of the whole man, and can accurse the soul as well as punish the body. He refuses to divide the inheritance between two brethren, as not having competent power to become Lord in temporal jurisdictions. He preaches against covetousness, and the placing felicities in worldly possessions, by a parable of a rich man, whose riches were too big for his barns, and big enough for his soul, and he ran over into voluptuousness, and stupid complacencies in his perishing goods: he was snatched from their possession, and his soul taken from him in the violence of a rapid and hasty sickness in the space of one night. Discourses of divine providence and care over us all, and descending even as low as grass. He exhorts to alms-deeds, to watchfulness, and

preparation against the sudden and unexpected coming of our Lord to judgment, or the arrest of death: tells the offices and sedulity of the clergy, under the apologue of stewards and governors of their lord's houses; teaches them gentleness and sobriety, and not to do evil upon confidence of their Lord's absence and delay: and teaches the people even of themselves to judge what is right concerning the signs of the coming of the Son of man. And the end of all these discourses was, that all men should repent, and live good lives, and be saved."

27. At this sermon "there were present some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices." For the Galileans were a sort of people that taught it to be unlawful to pay tribute to strangers, or to pray for the Romans; and because the Jews did both, they refused to communicate in their sacred rites, and would sacrifice apart: at which solemnity when Pilate the Roman deputy had apprehended many of them, he caused them all to be slain, making them to die upon the same altars. These were of the province of Judea, but of the same opinion with those who taught in Galilee, from whence the sect had its appellation. But to the story; Jesus made reply, that these external accidents, though they be sad and calamitous, yet they are no arguments of condemnation against the persons of the men, to convict them of a greater guilt than others, upon whom no such visible signatures have been imprinted. The purpose of such chances is, that we should "repent, lest we perish" in the like judgment.

28. About this time a certain ruler of a synagogue renewed the old question about the observation of the Sabbath, repining at Jesus that he cured "a woman that was crooked, loosing her from her infirmity, with which she had been afflicted eighteen years." But Jesus made the man ashamed by an argument from their own practice, who themselves "loose an

ox from the stall on the Sabbath, and lead him to watering." And by the same argument he also stopped the mouths of the scribes and Pharisees, which were open upon him for curing an hydropic person upon the Sabbath. For Jesus, that he might draw off and separate Christianity from the yoke of ceremonies by abolishing and taking off the strictest Mosaical rites, chose to do very many of his miracles upon the Sabbath, that he might do the work of abrogation and institution both at once; not much unlike the sabbatical pool in Judea, which was dry six days, but gushed out in a full stream upon the Sabbath. For though upon all days Christ was operative and miraculous, yet many reasons did concur and determine him to a more frequent working upon those days of public ceremony and convention. But going forth from thence he went up and down the cities of Galilee, re-enforcing the same doctrine he had formerly taught them, and daily adding new precepts and cautions, and prudent insinuations: "advertising of the multitudes of them that perish, and the paucity of them that shall be saved, and that we should 'strive to enter in at the strait gate;' that 'the way to destruction is broad' and plausible, 'the way to heaven' nice and austere, 'and few there be that find it.' Teaches them modesty at feasts, and entertainments of the poor: discourses of the many excuses and unwillingnesses of persons who were invited to the feast of the kingdom, the refreshments of the gospel; and tacitly insinuates the rejection of the Jews, who were the first invited, and the calling of the Gentiles, who were the persons 'called in from the highways and hedges.' He reprehends Herod for his subtilty and design to kill him; prophesies that he should die at Jerusalem; and intimates great sadnesses future to them for 'neglecting this their day' of visitation, and for 'killing the prophets and the messengers sent from God.'"

29. It now grew towards winter, and the Jews feast of dedication was at hand; therefore Jesus went up to Jerusalem to the feast, where he preached in Solomon's porch, which part of the temple stood entire from the first ruins: and the end of his sermon was, that the Jews had like to have stoned him. But retiring from thence he went beyond Jordan, where he taught the people in a most elegant and persuasive parable concerning "the mercy of God in accepting penitents, in the parable of the 'prodigal son' returning; discourses of the design of the Messiah coming into the world to recover erring persons from their sin and danger, in the apologues of the 'lost sheep, and goat;' and under the representment of an unjust, but prudent, steward, he taught us so to employ our present opportunities and estates, by laying them out in acts of mercy and religion, that when our souls shall be dismissed from the stewardship and custody of our body, we 'may be entertained in everlasting habitations.' He instructeth the Pharisees in the question of divorces, limiting the permissions of separations to the only cause of fornication: preferreth holy celibate before the estate of marriage, in them to whom the gift of continency is given in order to the kingdom of heaven. He telleth a story or a parable (for which, is uncertain) of a rich man (whom Euthymius, out of the tradition of the Hebrews, nameth Nymensis) and Lazarus; the first a voluptuous person, and uncharitable; the other pious, afflicted, sick, and a beggar: the first died, and went to hell; the second to Abraham's bosom. God so ordering the dispensation of good things, that we cannot easily enjoy two heavens, nor shall the infelicities of our lives (if we be pious) end otherwise than in a beatified condition. The epilogue of which story discovered this truth also, that the ordinary means of salvation are the express revelations of Scripture, and the ministeries of God ap-

pointment ; and whosoever neglects these shall not be supplied with means extraordinary, or if he were, they would be totally ineffectual."

30. And still the people drew water from the fountains of our Saviour, which streamed out in a full and continual emanation. For adding wave to wave, "line to line, precept upon precept," he "reproved the fastidiousness of the Pharisee, that came with eucharist to God and contempt to his brother ; and commended the humility of the Publican's address, who came deploring his sins, and with modesty, and penance, and importunity begged and obtained a mercy. Then he laid hands upon certain young children, and gave them benediction, charging his apostles to admit infants to him, because to them in person, and to such in emblem and signification, the kingdom of heaven does appertain. He instructs a young man in the ways and counsels of perfection, besides the observation of precepts, by heroic renunciations and acts of munificent charity." Which discourse because it alighted upon an indisposed and an unfortunate subject, ("for the young man was very rich") Jesus discourses "how hard it is for a rich man to be saved ; but he expounds himself to mean, 'they that trust in riches : ' and however it is a matter of so great temptation, that it is almost impossible to escape, yet 'with God nothing is impossible.' " But when the apostles heard the master bidding the young man "sell all, and give to the poor, and follow him," and for his reward promised him "a heavenly treasure : " Peter, in the name of the rest, began to think that this was their case, and the promise also might concern them : but they asked the question, "What shall we have, who have forsaken all, and followed thee ? " Jesus answered, that they should "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

31. And Jesus extended this mercy to every disciple that should "forsake either house, or

wife, or children, or any thing for his sake and the gospel's," and that they "should receive a hundred-fold in this life," by way of comfort and equivalency, "and in the world to come" thousands of glories and possessions in fruition and redundancy. For "they that are last shall be first, and the first shall be last : " and the despised people of this world shall reign like kings, and contempt itself shall swell up into glory, and poverty into an eternal satisfaction. And these rewards shall not be accounted according to the privileges of nations, or priority of vocation, but readiness of mind and obedience, and sedulity of operation after calling : which Jesus taught his disciples in the parable of the "labourers in the vineyard," to whom the master gave the same reward, though the times of their working were different : as their calling and employment had determined the opportunity of their labours.

DISCOURSE XVII.

Of Scandal, or giving and taking Offence.

1. A sad curse being threatened in the gospel to them who "offend any of Christ's little ones," that is, such as are novices and babes in Christianity, it concerns us to learn our duty and perform it, that we may avoid the curse : for, "woe to all them by whom offences come." And although the duty is so plainly explicated and represented in gloss and case by the several commentaries of St. Paul upon this menace of our blessed Saviour ; yet because our English word offence, which is commonly used in this question of scandal, is so large and equivocal that it hath made many preference, and intricated this article to some inconvenience, it is not without good purpose to draw into one body those propositions which the doctors of

spiritual life have described in the managing of this question.

2. First, By whatsoever we do our duty to God, we cannot directly do offence or give scandal to our brother; because in such cases where God hath obliged us, he hath also obliged himself to reconcile our duty to the designs of God, to the utility of souls, and the ends of charity. And this proposition is to be extended to our obedience to the lawful constitutions of our competent superiors, in which cases we are to look upon the commandment, and leave the accidental events to the disposition of that Providence who reconciles dissonancies in nature, and concentrates all the variety of accidents into his own glory. And whosoever is offended at me for obeying God or God's vicegerent, is offended at me for doing my duty; and in this there is no more dispute, but whether I shall displease God, or my peevish neighbour. These are such whom the Spirit of God complains of under other representations. They "think it strange we run not into the same excess of riot;" their "eye is evil because" their master's "eye is good;" and the abounding of God's grace also may become to them an occasion of falling, and the long-suffering of God the encouragement to sin. In this there is no difficulty: for in what case soever we are bound to obey God or man, in that case and in that conjunction of circumstances we have nothing permitted to our choice, and have no authority to remit of the right of God or our superior. And to comply with our neighbour in such questions, besides that it cannot serve any purposes of piety if it declines from duty in any instance, it is like giving alms out of the portion of orphans, or building hospitals with the money and spoils of sacrilege. It is pusillanimity, or hypocrisy, or a denying to confess Christ before men, to comply with any man, and to offend God, or omit a duty. Whatsoever is necessary to be

done, and is made so by God, no weakness or peevishness of man can make necessary not to be done. For the matter of scandal is a duty beneath the prime obligations of religion.

3. Secondly, Every thing which is used in religion is not matter of precise duty, but there are some things which indeed are pious and religious, but dispensable, voluntary, and commutable; such as are voluntary fasts, exterior acts of discipline and mortification not enjoined, great degrees of exterior worship, prostration, long prayers, vigils: and in these things, although there is not directly a matter of scandal, yet there may be some prudential considerations in order to charity and edification. By pious actions I mean either particular pursuances of a general duty, which are uncommanded in the instance, such as the minutes and expresses of alms; or else they are commended, but in the whole kind of them unenjoined, such as divines call the "counsels of perfection." In both these cases a man cannot be scandalous. For the man doing in charity and the love of God such actions as are aptly expressive of love, the man (I say) is not uncharitable in his purposes; and the actions themselves being either attempts or proceedings toward perfection, or else actions of direct duty, are as innocent in their productions as in themselves, and therefore, without the malice of the recipient, cannot induce him into sin: and nothing else is scandal. To do any pious act proceeds from the spirit of God, and to give scandal, from the spirit of malice or indiscretion; and therefore a pious action, whose fountain is love and wisdom, cannot end in uncharitableness or imprudence. But because when any man is offended at what I esteem piety, there is a question whether the action be pious or no: therefore it concerns him that works to take care that his action be either an act of duty, though not determined to a certain particular; or else be something counselled in

Scripture, or practised by a holy person there recorded, and no where reprov'd; or a practice warranted by such precedents as modest, prudent and religious persons account a sufficient inducement of such particulars: for he that proceeds upon such principles derives the warrant of his actions from beginnings which secure the particular, and quits the scandal.

4. This, I say, is a security against the uncharitableness and the sin of scandal; because a zeal of doing pious actions is a zeal according to God: but it is not always a security against the indiscretion of the scandal. He that reproves a foolish person in circumstances that provoke him, or make him impudent or blasphemous, does not give scandal, and brings no sin upon himself, though he occasioned it in the other. But if it was probable such effects would be consequent to the reprehension, his zeal was imprudent and rash; but so long as it was zeal for God, and in its own matter lawful, it could not be an active or guilty scandal: but if it be no zeal, and be a design to entrap a man's unweariness or passion or shame, and to disgrace the man, by that means or any other to make him sin, then it is directly the *offending* of our brother. They that "preached Christ out of envy" intended to do offence to the apostles: but because they were inpregnable, the sin rested in their own bosom, and God wrought his own ends by it. And in this sense they are scandalous persons who "fast for strife," who pray for rebellion, who entice simple persons into the snare by colours of religion. Those very exterior acts of piety become an offence, because they are done to evil purposes, to abuse proselytes, and to draw away disciples after them, and make them love the sin, and march under so splendid and fair colours. They who out of strictness and severity of persuasion represent the conditions of the gospel alike to every person, that is, nicer than Christ described them in all circum-

stances, and deny such liberties of exterior desires and complacency which may be reasonably permitted to some men, do very indiscreetly, and may occasion the alienation of some mens' minds from the entertainments of religion: but this being accidental to the thing itself, and to the purpose of the man, is not the sin of scandal, but it is the indiscretion of scandal, if by such means he divorces any man's mind from the cohabitation and unions of religion: and yet if the purpose of the man be to *afflict* weaker and unwise persons, it is a direct scandal, and one of those ways which the devil uses toward the peopling of his kingdom: it is a plain laying of a snare to entrap feeble and uninstructed souls.

5. But if the pious action have been formerly joined with any thing that is truly criminal, with idolatry, with superstition, with impious customs or impure rites, and by retaining the piety I give cause to my weak brother to think I approve of the *old* appendage, and by my reputation invite him to swallow the whole action without discerning the case is altered I am to omit that pious action, if it be not under command, until I have acquitted it from the suspicion of evil company. But when I have done what in prudence I guess sufficient to thaw the frost of jealousy, and to separate those dissonancies which formerly seemed united, I have done my duty of charity, by endeavouring to free my brother from the snare, and I have done what in Christian prudence I was obliged, when I have protested against the appendant crime. If afterwards the same person shall entertain the crime upon pretence of my example, who have plainly disavowed it, he lays the snare for himself, and is glad of the pretence, or will in spite enter into the net, that he might think it reasonable to rail at me. I may not with Christian charity or prudence wear the picture of our blessed Lord in rings or medals, though with great

affection and designs of doing him all the honour that I can, if by such pictures I invite persons, apt more to follow me than to *understand* me, to give divine honour to a picture : but when I have declared my hatred of superstitious worshippings, and given my brother warning of the snare which his own mistake or the devil's malice was preparing for him, I may then without danger signify my piety and affections in any civil representations, which are not against God's law, or the customs of the church, or the analogy of faith. And there needs no other reason to be given for this rule than that there is no reason to be given against it. If the nature of the thing be innocent, and the purpose of the man be pious, and he hath used his moral industry to secure his brother against accidental mischances and abuses his duty in this particular can have no more parts and instances.

6. But it is too crude an assertion to affirm indefinitely, that whatsoever hath been abused to evil or superstitious purposes must presently be abjured, and never entertained for fear of scandal ; for it is certain that the best things have been most abused. Have not some persons used certain verses of the Psalter as an antidote against the tooth-ache ? and carried the blessed sacrament in pendants about their necks as a charm to countermand witches ? and St. John's gospel as a spell against wild beasts and wilder untamed spirits ? Confession of sins to the ministers of religion hath been made an instrument to serve base ends ; and so indeed hath all religion been abused : and some persons have been so receptive of scandal, that they suspected all religion to be a mere stratagem, because they have observed very many men have used it so. For some natures are like sponges or sugar, whose utmost verge if you dip in wine, it *drowns* itself by the moisture it sucks up, and is drenched all over, receiving its alteration from within ; its own

nature did the mischief, and plucks on its own dissolution. And these men are greedy to receive a scandal, and when it is presented but in small instances, they suck it up to the dissolution of their whole religion, being glad of a quarrel, that their impieties may not want all excuse. But yet it is certainly very unreasonable to reject excellent things because they have been abused ; as if separable accidents had altered natures and essences, or that they resolve never to forgive the duties for having once fallen into the hands of unskilful or malicious persons. Hezekiah took away the brazen serpent because the people abused it to idolatry ; but the serpent had long before lost its use : and yet if the people had not been a peevish and refractory and superstitious people, in whose nature it was to take all occasions of superstition ; and farther yet, if the taking away such occasions and opportunities of that sin in special had not been most agreeable with the designs of God, in forbidding to the people the common use of all images in the second commandment, which was given them after the erection of that brazen statue ; Hezekiah possibly would not, or at least had not been bound to have destroyed that monument of an old story and a great blessing, but have sought to separate the abuse from the minds of men, and retained the image. But in Christianity, when none of these circumstances occur, where by the greatness and plenty of revelations we are more fully instructed in the ways of duty, and when the thing itself is pious, and the abuse very separable, it is infinite disparagement to us, or to our religion, either that our religion is not sufficient to cure an abuse, or that we will never part with it, but we must unpardonably reject a good, because it had once upon it a crust or spot of leprosy, though since it hath been washed in the waters of reformation. The primitive Christians abstained from actions of themselves indifferent, which the

unconverted people used, if those actions were symbolical, or adopted into false religions, or not well understood by those they were bound to satisfy. But when they had washed off the accrescences of Gentile superstition, they chose such rites as their neighbours used, and as had designs not imprudent or unhandsome; and they were glad of a heathen temple to celebrate the Christian rites in, and they made no other change, but that they ejected the devil, and invited their Lord into the possession.

7. Thirdly, In things merely indifferent, whose practice is not limited by command, nor their nature heightened by an appendant piety, we must use our liberty so as may not offend our brother, or lead him into a sin directly or indirectly. For scandal being directly against charity, it is to be avoided in the same measure and by the same proportions in which charity is to be pursued. Now we must so use ourselves, that we must cut off a foot, or pluck out an eye, rather than the one should bear us and the other lead us to sin and death; we must rather rescind all the natural and sensual or dearest invitations to vice, and deny ourselves lawful things, than that lawful things should betray us to unlawful actions. And this rule is the measure of charity: our neighbour's soul ought to be dearer unto us than any temporal privilege. It is lawful for me to eat herbs, or fish, and to observe an ascetic diet. But, if by such austerities, I lead others to a good opinion of Montanism, or the practices of Pythagoras, or to believe flesh to be impure, I must rather alter my diet, than teach him to sin by mistaking me. St. Paul gave an instance of eating flesh sold in the shambles from the idol temples: to eat in the relation of an idol-sacrifice is a great sin; but when it is sold in the shambles, the property is altered to them that understand it so. But yet even this, Paul would not do, if by so doing he should encourage undiscerning people to eat all meat conveyed

from the temple, and offered to devils. It is not in every man's head to distinguish formalities, and to make abstractions of purpose from exterior acts, and to alter his devotions by new relations and respects depending upon intellectual and metaphysical notions. And therefore it is not safe to do an action which is not lawful, but after making distinctions, before ignorant and weaker persons, who swallow down the bolus and the box that carries it, and never pare their apple, or take the core out. If I by the law of charity must rather quit my own goods than suffer my brother to perish, much rather must I quit my privilege, and those superstructures of favour and grace which Christ hath given me beyond my necessities, than wound the spirit and destroy the soul of a weak man, "for whom Christ died." It is an inordinate affection to love my own ease, and circumstances of pleasure, before the soul of a brother; and such things are the privileges of Christian liberty: for Christ hath taken off from us the restraints which God had laid upon the Jews in meat and holidays; but these are but circumstances of grace given us for opportunities, and cheap instances of charity; we should ill die for our brother, who will not lose a meal to prevent his sin, or change a dish to save his soul. And if the thing be indifferent to us, yet it ought not to be indifferent to us whether our brother live or die.

8. Fourthly, And yet we must not, to please peevish or froward people, *betray* our liberty which Christ hath given us. If any man opposes the lawfulness and licence of indifferent actions, or be disturbed at my using my privileges innocently; in the first case I am bound to use them still, in the second I am not bound to quit them to please him. For in the first instance, he that shall cease to use his liberty, to please him that says his liberty is unlawful, encourages him that says so in his false opinion, and by complying with him gives the scandal;

and he who is angry with me for making use of it, is a person that, it may be, is "crept in to spy out" and invade "my liberty," but not apt to be seduced into sin by that act of mine which he detests, for which he despises me, and so makes my person unapt to be exemplary to him. To be angry with me for doing what Christ hath allowed me, and which is part of the liberty he purchased for me when he took upon himself the form of a servant, is to judge me, and to be uncharitable to me : and he that does so is beforehand with me, and upon the active part ; he does the scandal to me, and by offering to deprive me of my liberty he makes my way to heaven narrower and more encumbered than Christ left it, and so places a stumbling-stone in my way, although I put none in his. And if such peevishness and discontent of a brother engages me to a new and unimposed yoke, then it were in the power of my enemy or any malevolent person to make me never to keep a festival, or never to observe any private fast, never to be prostrate at my prayers, nor to do any thing but according to his leave ; and, thus, his humour shall become the rule of my actions ; and then my charity to him shall be the greatest uncharitableness in the world to myself, and his liberty shall be my bondage. Add to this, that such complying, and obeying the peevishness of discontented persons is to no end of charity : for besides that such concessions never satisfy persons who are unreasonably angry, because by the same reason they may demand more, as they ask this for which they had no reason at all. It also encourages them to be peevish, and gives fuel to the passion, and feeds the wolf, and so encourages the sin, and prevents none.

9. Fifthly, For he only gives scandal, who induces his brother directly or collaterally into sin as appears by all the discourses in Scripture guiding us in this duty ; and it is called "laying a stumbling-block in our brother's way,

a wounding the conscience of our weak brother." Thus Balaam was said to lay a scandal before the sons of Israel, by tempting them to fornication with the daughters of Moab. Every evil example, or imprudent, sinful and unwary deportment, is a scandal, because it invites others to do the like ; leading them by the hand, taking off the strangeness and insolency of the act, which deters many men from entertaining it ; and it gives some offers of security to others, that they shall escape as we have done ; besides that it is in the nature of all agents, natural and moral, to assimilate either by proper efficiency, or by counsel and moral invitements, others to themselves. But this is a direct scandal : and such it is to give money to an idle person, who you know will be drunk with it ; or to invite an intemperate person to an opportunity of excess, who desires it always, but without thee wants it. Indirectly and accidentally, but very criminally, they give scandal, who introduce persons into a state of *life*, from whence probably they pass into a state of *sin*. So did the Israelites, who married their daughters to the idolatrous Moabites ; and so do they who entrust a pupil to a vicious guardian. For although God can preserve children in the midst of flames without scorching, yet, if they singe their hair, or scorch their flesh, they that put them in are guilty of the burning. And yet farther, if persons so exposed to danger should escape by miracle, yet they escape, not who expose them to the danger. They who threw the children of the captivity into the furnace were burnt to death, though the children were not hurt : and the very offering a person, in our trust, to a certain or probable danger foreseen and understood, is a likely way to pass sin upon the person so exposed, but a certain way to contract it in ourselves ; it is directly against charity ; for no man loves a soul unless he loves its safety, and he cares not to have his child safe that throws

him into the fire. Hither are to be reduced all false doctrines aptly productive of evil life; the doctrines are scandalous, and the men guilty, if they understand the consequences of their own propositions: or if they think it probable that persons will be led by such doctrines into evil persuasions, though they themselves believe them not to be necessary products of their opinions; yet the very publishing opinions which (of themselves not being necessary, or otherwise very profitable) are apt to be understood, by weak persons at least, to ill ends, is against charity, and the duty we owe to our brother's soul.

Sixthly, It is not necessary for ever to abstain from things indifferent to prevent the offending of a brother, but only till I have taken away that rock against which some did stumble, or have done my endeavour to remove it. In questions of religion it is lawful to use primitive and ancient words, at which men have been weakened and seem to stumble, when the objection is cleared, and the ill consequences and suspicion disavowed: and it may be of good use, charity and edification, to speak the language of the purest ages, although some words were used also in the impurest ages, and descended along upon changing and declining articles, when it is rightly explicated in what sense the best men did innocently use them, and the same sense is now protested. But in this case it concerns prudence to see that the benefit be greater than the danger. And the same also is to be said concerning all the actions and parts of Christian liberty. For if after I have removed unevenness and objection of the accident, that is, if when I have explained my disrelish to the crime, which might possibly be gathered up and taken into practice by my misunderstood example, then if any man will stumble and fall, it is a resolution to fall, a love of danger, a peevishness of spirit, a voluntary misunderstanding; it is not a misery in

the man more than it is his own fault; and whenever the cause of any sin becomes *criminal* to the man that sins, it is certain that if the other who was made the occasion did disavow and protest against the crime, the man that sins is the only *guilty* person, both in the effect and cause too; for the other could do no more but use a moral and prudent industry to prevent his being misinterpreted; and if he were tied to more, he must quit his interest for ever, for a perpetual scruple; which is like taking away all laws to prevent disobedience, and making all even to secure the world against the effects of pride or stubbornness. I add to this, that since actions indifferent in their own natures are not productive of effects and actions criminal, it is merely by accident that men are abused into a sin; that is, by weakness, by misconceit, by something that either discovers malice or indiscretion; which because the act itself does not of itself, if the man do not voluntary or by intention, the sin dwells nowhere but with the man that entertains it: the man is no longer weak than he is mistaken, and he is not mistaken or abused into the sin by the example of any man who had rightly stated his own question, and divorced the suspicion of the sin from his action; whatsoever comes after this is not weakness of understanding, but strength of passion; and he that is "always learning, and never comes to the knowledge of the truth," is something besides a silly man. Men cannot be always "babes in Christ," without their own fault; they are no longer "Christ's little ones" than they are inculpably ignorant. For it is but a mantle cast over pride and frowardness, to think ourselves able to teach others, and yet pretend offence and scandal; to scorn to be instructed, and yet complain that we are offended, and led into sin for want of knowledge of our duty. He that understands his duty is not a person capable of scandal by things indifferent. And

it is certain, that no man can say concerning himself, that he is scandalized at another; that is, that he is led into sin by mistake and weakness; for if himself knows it, the mistake is gone: well may the guides of their souls complain concerning such persons, that their sin is procured by offending persons or actions; but he that complains concerning himself to the same purpose, pretends ignorance for other ends, and contradicts himself by his complaint and knowledge of his error. The boy was weakly peevish who, when his father bid him pronounce *Thalassius*, told him he could not pronounce *Thalassius*, at the same time speaking the word: just so impotent, weak and undiscerning a person is that, who would forbid me to do an indifferent action, upon pretence that it makes him ignorantly sin; for his saying so confutes his ignorance, and argues him of a worse folly; it is like asking my neighbour, whether such an action be done against my own will.

Seventhly, When an action is apt to be mistaken to contrary purposes, it concerns the prudence and charity of a christian to use such compliance as best co-operates to God's glory and hath in it the less danger. The apostles gave an instance in the matter of circumcision, in which they walked warily, and with variety of design, that they might invite the Gentiles to the easy yoke of Christianity, and yet not deter the Jew by a disrespect of the law of Moses. And therefore St. Paul circumcised Timothy, because he was among the Jews, and descended from a Jewish parent; and in that instance gave sentence in compliance with the Jewish persuasion, because Timothy might well be accounted for a Jew by birth; and unto them the rights of Moses were for a while permitted: but when Titus was brought into the scene of a mixed assembly, and was no Jew, but a Greek, whom Paul had taught "that they ought not to be circumcised;"

although some Jews watched what he would do, yet he plainly refused to circumcise him; choosing rather to leave the Jews angry, than the Gentiles scandalized or led into an opinion that circumcision was necessary, or that he had taught them otherwise out of collateral ends, or now that he did so. But when a case of Christian liberty happened to St. Peter, he was not so prudent in his choice; but at the coming of certain Jews from Jerusalem withdrew himself from the society of the Gentiles; not considering, that it was worse if the Gentiles, who were invited to Christianity by the sweetness of its liberty, should fall back, when they that taught them the excellency of Christian liberty durst not stand to it, than if those Jews were displeased at Christianity for admitting Gentiles into its communion, after they had been instructed that God had broken down the partition-wall, and made them one sheepfold. It was of greater concernment to God's glory to gain the Gentiles, than to retain the Jews; and yet if it had not, the apostles were bound to bend to the inclinations of the weaker, rather than be mastered by the wilfulness of the stronger, who had been sufficiently instructed in the articles of Christian liberty, and in the adoption of the Gentiles into the family of God. Thus if it be a question whether I should abate any thing of my external religion or ceremonies to satisfy an heretic or a contentious person, who pretends scandal to himself, and is indeed of another persuasion; and at the same time I know that good persons would be weakened at such forbearance, and estranged from the good persuasion and charity of communion, which is part of their duty; it more concerns charity and the glory of God that I secure the right, then twine about the wrong, wilful, and malicious persons. A prelate must rather fortify and encourage obedience, and strengthen discipline, than by remissness toward refractory spirits, and a desire not to seem

severe, weaken the hands of conscientious persons, by taking away the marks of difference between them that obey him and them that obey not; and in all cases when the question is between a friend to be secured from Apostacy, or an enemy to be gained from indifference, St. Paul's rule is to be observed, "do good to all, but especially to the household faith. When the church in a particular instance cannot be kind to both, she must first love her own children.

12. Eighthly, But when the question is between pleasing and contenting the *fancies* of a friend, and the gaining of an enemy, the greater good of the enemy is infinitely to be preferred before the satisfaction the unnecessary humour of the friend; and therefore, that we may gain persons of a different religion, it is lawful to entertain them in their innocent customs, that we may represent ourselves charitable and just, apt to comply in what we can, and yet for no end complying farther than we are permitted. It was a policy of the devil to abuse Christians to the rites of Mithra by imitating the Christian ceremonies; and the Christians themselves were beforehand with him in that policy; for they facilitated the reconciliation of Judaism with Christianity by common rites, and invited the Gentiles to the Christian churches, because they never violated the heathen temples, but loved the men, and imitated their innocent rites, and only offered to reform their errors; and hallow their abused purposes: and this, if it had no other contradictory or unhandsome circumstance, gave no offence to other Christians, when they had learned to trust *them* with the government of ecclesiastical affairs to whom God had committed them, and they all had the same purposes of religion and charity. And when there is no objection against this but the furies or greater heats of a mistaken zeal, the compliance with evil or unbelieving persons, to gain them from their errors to the ways of truth and sincerity, is great pru-

dence and great charity; because it chooses and acts a greater good at no other charge or expense but the discomposing of an intemperate zeal.

13. Ninthly, we are not bound to intermit a good or a lawful action as soon any man tells us it is scandalous, (for that may be an easy stratagem to give me laws, and destroy my liberty,) but either when the action is of itself, or by reason of a public known indisposition of some persons, probably introductive of a sin; or when we know it is so in fact. The other is but affrighting a man; this only is prudent, that my charity be guided by such rules, as determine wise men to actions or omissions respectively. And therefore a light fame is not strong enough to wrest my liberty from me; but a reasonable belief or a certain knowledge, in the taking of which estimate we must neither be too credulous and easy, nor yet ungentle and stubborn, but do according to the actions of wise men and the charities of a Christian. Hither we may refer the rules of abstaining from things which are of evil report. For not every thing which is of good report is to be followed, for then a false opinion, when it is become popular, must be possessed for conscience sake; nor yet every thing that is of bad report is to be avoided, for nothing endured more shame and obloquy than Christianity at its first commencement. But by good report we are to understand such things as are well reported by good men and wise men, or Scripture, or the consent of nations. And thus for a woman to marry within the year of mourning is scandalous, because it is of evil report, gives suspicion of lightness or some worse confederacy before the death of her husband; the thing itself is apt to minister the suspicion, and this we are bound to prevent; and unless the suspicion be malicious, or imprudent and unreasonable, we must conceal our actions from the surprises and deprehensions of suspicion. It

was scandalous amongst the old Romans not to marry; among the Christians for a clergyman to marry twice, because it was against an apostolical canon; but when it became of ill report for any Christian to marry a second time because this evil report was begun by the error of Montanus, and is against a permission of holy Scripture, no lay-christian was bound to abstain from a second bed for fear of giving scandal.

14. Tenthly, The precept of avoiding scandal concerns the governors of the church or state in the making and execution of laws. For no law in things indifferent ought to be made to the provocation of the subject or against that *public disposition* which is in the spirits of men, and which will certainly cause perpetual irregularities and schisms. Before the law is made, the superior must comply with the subject; after it is made, the subject must comply with the law. But in this the church hath made fair provision, accounting no laws obligatory till the people have accepted them, and given tacit approbation; for ecclesiastical canons have their time of probation, and if they become a burthen to the people, or occasion schisms, tumults, public disunion of affections, and jealousies against authority, the laws give place, and either fix not when they are not first approved, or disappear by desuetude. And in the execution of laws, no less care is to be taken; for many cases occur in which the laws can be rescued from being a snare to men's consciences by no other way, but by dispensation, and slackening of the discipline as to certain particulars. Mercy and sacrifice, the letter and the spirit, the words and the intention, the general case and the particular exception, the present disposition and the former state of things, are oftentimes so repugnant, and of such contradictory interests, there is no stumbling-block more troublesome or dangerous than a severe liberal and rigorous exacting of laws in all cases. But when stubbornness or a con-

stant spirit, when rebellion and pride, when secular interest or ease and dissimulation, set men up against the laws, the laws then are upon the defensive, and ought not to give place. It is madness to cure particular disorders, by removing a constitution decreed by public wisdom for the general good. When the evil occasioned by the law is greater than the good designed, or than the good which will come by it in the present constitution of things, and the evil can by no other remedy be healed, it concerns the law-giver's charity to take off such positive constitutions, which in the authority are merely human, and the matter indifferent, and evil in the event. The sum of this whole duty I shall choose to represent in the words of an excellent person, St. Jerome: "We must, for the avoiding of scandal, quit every thing which may be omitted without prejudice to the three-fold truth, of life, of justice, and doctrine;" meaning, that what is not expressly commanded by God or our superiors, or what is not expressly commended as an act of piety and perfection, or what is not an obligation of justice, that is, in which the interest of a third person, or else our own Christian liberty, is not totally concerned, all that is to be given in sacrifice to mercy, and to be made matter of edification and charity, but not of scandal; that is, of danger, and sin, and falling, to our neighbour.

THE PRAYER

O eternal Jesus, who art united unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, give us of thy abundant charity, that we may love the eternal benefit of our brother's soul with the diligent and affectionate care and tenderness, give us a fellow-feeling of one another's calamities, a readiness to bear each

others burthens, aptness to forbear, wisdom to advise, counsel to direct, and a spirit of meekness and modesty, trembling at our infirmities, fearful in our brother's dangers, and joyful in his restitution and securities. Lord, let all our actions be pious and prudent; ourselves "wise as serpents and innocent as doves," and our whole life exemplary, and just, and charitable; that we may like lamps shining in thy temple give thee, and enlighten others, and guide them to thy sanctuary; and shining clearly and burning jealousy, when the bridegroom shall come to bind up his jewels, and beautify his spouse, and gather his saints together, we and all thy Christian people, knit in holy fellowship, may "enter into the joy of our Lord, and partake of the eternal refreshments of the kingdom of light and glory, where thou, O holy and eternal Jesus, livest and reignest in the excellencies of a kingdom, and the infinite durations of eternity. Amen.

DISCOURSE XVIII.

Of the Causes and Manner of Divine Judgments.

1. God's judgments are like "the writing upon the wall," which was a missive of anger from God upon Belshazzar; it came upon an errand of revenge, and yet was writ in so dark characters that none could read it but a prophet. Whenever God speaks from heaven, he would have us to understand his meaning; and if he declares not his sense in particular signification, yet we understand his meaning well enough, if every voice of God lead us to repentance. Every sad accident is directed against sin, either to prevent it, or to cure it; to glorify God, or to humble us; to make us go out of ourselves, and to rest upon the centre of all felicities, that we may derive help from the

same hand that smote us. Sin and punishment are so near relatives, that when God hath marked any person with a sadness or strange accident, men think it warrant enough for their uncharitable censures, and condemn the man whom God hath smitten, making God the executioner of their uncertain or ungentle sentences. "Whether sinned this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" said the pharisees to our blessed Lord. "Neither this man nor his parents," was the answer: meaning, that God had other ends, in that accident, to serve; and that it was not an effect of wrath, but a design of mercy both directly and collaterally. God's glory must be seen clearly by occasion of the curing the blind man. But in the present case the answer was something different. Pilate slew the Galileans, when they were sacrificing in their conventicles apart from the Jews. For they first separated from obedience and paying tribute to Cæsar; and then from the church, who disavowed their mutinous and discontented doctrines. The cause of the one and the other are linked in mutual complications and endearments, and he who despises the one will quickly disobey the other. Presently, upon the report of this sad accident, the people run to the judgment-seat, and every man was ready to be accuser and witness and judge upon these poor destroyed people. But Jesus allays their heat, and though he would by no means acquit these persons from deserving death for their denying tribute to Cæsar, yet he alters the face of the tribunal, and makes those persons who were so apt to be accusers and judges to act another part, even of guilty persons too, that since they will needs be judging, they might judge themselves; for, "think not these were greater sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered such things: I tell you nay, but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish: meaning, that although there was great probability to believe such persons, schismatics I mean

and rebels, to be the greatest sinners of the world, yet themselves, who had designs to destroy the Son of God, had deserved as great damnation. And yet it is observable, that the holy Jesus only compared the sins of them that suffered, with the estate of other the Galileans who suffered not; and that also applies it to the persons present who told the news: to consign this truth unto us, that when persons confederate in the same crimes are spared from a present judgment falling upon others of their own society, it is indeed a strong alarm to all to secure themselves by repentance against the hostilities and eruptions of sin; but yet it is no exemption or security to them that escape, to believe themselves persons less sinful; for God sometimes decimates or tithes delinquent persons, and they die for a common crime, according as God hath cast their lot in the decrees of predestination; and either they that remain are sealed up to a worse calamity, or left within the reserves and mercies of repentance; for in this there is some variety of determination and undiscerned providence.

2. The purpose of our blessed Saviour is of great use to us in all the traverses and changes, and especially in the sad and calamitous accidents, of the world. But in the misfortune of others, we are to make other discourses concerning divine judgments than when the case is of nearer concernment to ourselves. For first, when we see a person come to an unfortunate and untimely death, we must not conclude such a man perishing and miserable to all eternity. It was a sad calamity that fell upon the man of Judah, that returned to eat bread into the prophet's house, contrary to the word of the Lord: he was abused into the act by a prophet, and a pretence of a command from God; and whether he did violence to his own understanding, and believed the man because he was willing, or did it in sincerity, or in what degree of sin or excuse the action might consist

no man there knew; and yet a lion slew him, and the lying prophet that abused him escaped and went to his grave in peace. Some persons joined in society or interest with criminals have perished in the same judgments; and yet it would be hard to call them equally guilty, who in the accident were equally miserable and involved. And they who are not strangers in the affairs of the world cannot but have heard or seen some persons who have lived well and moderately, though not like the flames of a holocaust, yet like the ashes of incense sending up good perfumes, and keeping a constant and slow fire of piety and justice, yet have been surprised in the midst of some unusual, unaccustomed irregularity, and died in that sin: a sudden gaiety of fortune, a great joy, a violent change, a friend is come, or a marriage day hath transported some persons to indiscretions and too bold a licence; and the indiscretion hath, betrayed them to idle company, and the company to drink, and drink to a fall, and that hath hurried them to their grave. And it were a sad sentence to think God would not repute the untimely death for a punishment great enough to that deflexion from duty, and judge the man according to the constant tenor of his former life; unless such act was of malignity great enough to outweigh the former habits, and interrupt the whole state of acceptance and grace. Something like this was the case of Uzzah, who espying the tottering ark went to support it with an unhallowed hand; God smote him, and he died immediately. It were too severe to say his zeal and indiscretion carried him beyond a temporal death to the ruins of eternity. Origen and many others have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven, and did well after it; but those that did so, and died of the wound, were smitten of God, and died in their folly: and yet it is rather to be called a sad consequence of their indiscretion; than the express of a final anger from God.

Almighty. For as God takes off our sins and punishments by parts, remitting to some persons the sentence of death, and inflicting the fine of a temporal loss; or the gentle scourge of a lesser sickness; so also he lays it on by parts; and according to the proper proportions of the man and of the crime; and every transgression and lesser deviation from our duty does not drag the soul to death eternal, but God suffers our repentance, though imperfect, to have an imperfect effect, knocking off the fetters by degrees, and leading us in some cases to a council, in some to judgment, and in some to hell-fire: but it is not always certain that he who is led to the prison-doors shall lie there entombed; and a man may, by a judgment, be brought to the gates of hell, and yet those gates not prevail against him. This discourse concerns persons whose life is habitually fair and just, but are surprised in some unhand-some, but less criminal action, and die or suffer some great calamity as the instrument of its expiation or amendment.

3. Secondly, But if the person upon whom the judgment falls be habitually vicious, or the crime of a clamorous nature or deeper tincture; if the man "sin a sin unto death," and either meets it, or some other remarkable calamity not so feared as death; provided we pass no farther than the sentence we see then executed, it is not against charity or prudence to say, "this calamity in its own formality, and by the intention of God, is a punishment and judgment." In the favourable cases of honest and just persons our sentence and opinions ought also to be favourable, and in such questions to incline ever to the side of charitable construction; and read other ends of God in the accidents of our neighbour than revenge or express wrath. But when the impiety of a person is scandalous and notorious, when it is clamorous and violent, when it is habitual and yet corrigible, if we find a sickness and calamity

dwelling with such a sinner, especially if the punishment be spiritual, we read the sentence of God written with his own hand; and it is not rashness of opinion; or a pressing into the secrets of providence, to say the same thing which God hath published to all the world, by the expressions of his Spirit. In such cases we are to observe the "severity of God, on them that fall severity;" and to use those judgments as instruments of the fear of God, and arguments to hate sin; which we could not well do, if we did not look on them as verifications of God's threatening against great and impenitent sinners. But then if we descend to particulars, we may easily be deceived.

4. For some men use diligently to observe the accidents and chances of providence upon those especially who differ from them in opinion; and whatever ends God can have, or whatever sins man can have, yet we lay that in fault which we therefore hate because it is most against our interest; the contrary opinion is our enemy, and we also think God hates it. But such fancies do seldom serve either the ends of truth or charity. Pierre Calceon died under the barber's hand: there wanted not some who said it was a judgment upon him for condemning to the fire the famous Pucelle of France, who prophesied the expulsion of the English out of the kingdom. They that thought this believed her to be a prophetess; but others, that thought her a witch, were willing to find out another conjecture for the sudden death of the gentleman. Garnier, Earl of Gretz, kept the Patriarch of Jerusalem from his right in David's tower and the city, and died within three days; and by Dabert the Patriarch it was called a judgment upon him for his sacrilege. But the uncertainty of that censure appeared to them, who considered that Baldwin (who gave commission to Garnier to withstand the Patriarch) did not die; but Godfrey of Bouillon did die immediately

after he had passed the right of the Patriarch. And yet when Baldwin was beaten at Rhamula, some bold people pronounced that then God punished him upon the Patriarch's score, and thought his sacrilege to be the secret cause of his overthrow; and yet his own pride and rashness was the more visible, and the judgment was but a cloud, and passed away quickly into a succeeding victory. But I instance in a trifle. Certain it is, that God removed the candlestick from the Levantine churches because he had a quarrel unto them; for that punishment is never sent upon pure designs of emanation, or for direct and immediate purposes of the divine glory, but ever makes reflection upon the past sin: but when we descend to a judgment of the particulars, God walks so in the dark to us, that it is not discerned upon what ground he smote them. Some say it was because they dishonoured the eternal Jesus, in denying the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son. And in this some thought themselves sufficiently assured by a sign from heaven, because the Greeks lost Constantinople upon Whitsunday, the day of the festival of the Holy Spirit. The church of Rome calls the churches of the Greek communion schismatical, and thinks God righted the Roman quarrel when he revenged his own. Some think they were cut off for being breakers of images; others think that their zeal against images was a means they were cut off no sooner: and yet he that shall observe what innumerable sects, heresies, and factions were commenced amongst them, and how they were wanton with religion, making it serve ambitious and unworthy ends, will see that, besides the ordinary conjectures of interested persons, they had such causes of their ruin, as we also now feel heavily incumbent upon ourselves. To see God adding eighteen years to the life of Hezekiah upon his prayer, and yet cutting off the young son of David begotten in adulterous

embraces; to see him rejecting Adonijah, and receiving Solomon to the kingdom, begotten of the same mother, whose son God in anger formerly slew. To observe his mercies to Manassah, in accepting him to favour, and continuing the kingdom to him; and his severity to Zedekiah, in causing his eyes to be put out; to see him rewarding Nebuchadnezzar with the spoils of Egypt, for destroying Tyre, and executing God's severe anger against it, and yet punishing others for being executioners of his wrath upon Jerusalem, even then when he purposed to chastise it; to see Wenceslaus raised from a peasant to a throne, and Pompey from a great prince, reduced to that condition, that a pupil and a eunuch passed sentence of death upon him; to see great fortunes fall into the hands of a fool, and honourable old persons and learned men descend to unequal beggary; to see him strike a stroke with his own hand in the conversion of Saul, and another quite contrary in the cutting off of Judas, must needs be some restraint to our judgments concerning the *general* state of those men who lie under the rod; but it proclaims an infinite uncertainty in the particulars, since we see contrary accidents happening to persons guilty of the same crime, or put in the same dispositions. God hath marked all great sins with some signal and express judgments, and hath transmitted the records of them, or represented them before our eyes; that is, hath done so in our age, or it hath been noted to have been done before: and that being sufficient to affright us from those crimes, God hath not thought it expedient to do the same things to *all* persons in the same cases, having to all persons produced instances and examples of fear by fewer accidents, sufficient to restrain us, but not enough to pass sentence upon the changes of Divine Providence.

5. But sometimes God speaks plainer, and gives us notice what crimes he punishes in

others, that we may the rather avoid such rocks of offence. If the crime and the punishment be symbolical, and have proportion and correspondence of parts, the hand of God strikes the man, but holds up one finger to point at the sin. The death of the child of Bathsheba was a plain declaration that the anger of God was upon David for the adulterous mixture. The blasphemer whose tongue was presently struck with an ulcerous tumour, with his tongue declared the glories of God and his own shame. And it was not doubted but God, when he smote the lady of Dominicus Silvius, the Duke of Venice, with a loathsome and unsavoury disease did intend to chastise a remarkable vanity of hers in various and costly perfumes, which she affected in an unreasonable manner, and to very evil purposes. And that famous person, and of excellent learning, Giachettus of Geneva, being by his wife found dead in the unlawful embraces of a strange woman, who also died at the same instant, left an awful example of God's anger upon the crime, and an evidence that he was then judged for his intemperate lust. Such are all those punishments which are natural consequents to a crime: as dropsies, redness of eyes, dissolution of nerves, apoplexies, to continual drunkenness; to intemperate eating, short lives and sudden deaths; to lust, a captive slavish disposition, and a foul diseased body; fire and sword, and depopulations of towns and villages, the consequents of ambition and unjust wars; poverty to prodigality; and all those judgments which happen upon cursings and horrid imprecations, when God is, under a curse, called to attest a lie, and to connive at impudence: or when the oppressed persons, in the bitterness of their souls wish evil and pray for vengeance on their oppressors; or that the church upon just cause inflicts spiritual censures, and "delivers unto Satan," or curses and declares the divine sentence against sinners, as St. Peter against Ananias and Sapphira, and St. Paul

against Elymas; and of old, Moses against Pharaoh and Egypt, (of this nature also was the plague of a withered hand inflicted upon Jeroboam, for stretching forth his hand to strike the prophet.) In these and all such instances the offspring is so like the parent, that it cannot easily be concealed. Sometime the crime is of that nature, that it cries aloud for vengeance, or is threatened with a special kind of punishment, which by the observation and experience of the world hath regularly happened to a certain sort of persons: such are dissolutions of estates, the punishment of sacrilege; a descending curse upon posterity for four generations, especially threatened to the crime of idolatry; any plague whatsoever to oppression; untimely death to murder; an unthriving estate to the detention of whatsoever is God's portion allotted for the services of religion; untimely and strange deaths to the persecutors of Christian religion: Nero killed himself; Domitian was killed by his servants; Maximinus and Decius were murdered, together with their children; Valerianus imprisoned, flayed, and slain with tortures by Sapor king of Persia; Diocletian perished by his own hand, and his house was burnt with the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, by fire from above; Antiochus the president under Aurelian, while Agapetus was in his agony and sufferance of martyrdom, cried out of a flame within him, and died; Flaccus vomitted out his entrails presently after he had caused Gregory bishop of Spoleto to be slain; and Dioscorus, the father of St. Barbara, accused and betrayed his daughter to the hangman's cruelty for being a Christian, and he died by the hand of God by fire from heaven. These are God's tokens, marks upon the body of infected persons, and declare the malignity of the disease, and bid us all beware of those desperate crimes.

6. Thirdly, But then in these and all other accidents we must first observe from the cause to the effect, and then judge from the effect

concerning the nature and the degree of the cause. We cannot conclude thus, "This family is lessened, beggared, or extinct, therefore they are guilty of sacrilege;" but thus, "They are sacrilegious, and God hath blotted out their name from among the posterities, therefore this judgment was an expression of God's anger against sacrilege." The judgment will not imply a sin, but when a sin implies the judgment with a legible character and a prompt signification, not to understand God's choice is next to stupidity or carelessness. Arius was known to be a seditious, heretical, and dissembling person, and his entrails descended on the earth when he went to cover his feet: it was very suspicious that this was the punishment of those sins which were the worst in him; but he that shall conclude Arius was an heretic or seditious, upon no other ground but because his bowels gushed out, begins imprudently, and proceeds uncharitably. But it is considerable, that men do not arise to great crimes on the sudden, but by degrees of carelessness to lesser impieties, and then to clamorous sins: and God is therefore said to punish great crimes or actions of highest malignity, because as they are commonly productions from the spirit of reprobation, they are the highest ascents, and suppose a body of sin. And therefore although the judgment may be intended to punish all our sins, yet it is like the Syrian army, it kills all that are its enemies, but it hath a special commission "to fight against none but the king of Israel," because his death would be the dissolution of the body. And if God humbles a man for his great sin, that is, for those acts which combine and consummate all the rest, possibly the body of sin may separate, and be apt to be scattered and subdued by single acts and instruments of mortification: and therefore it is but reasonable, in our making use of God's judgments upon others, to think that God will rather strike at the greatest crimes; not only because they are

in themselves of greatest malice and iniquity, but because they are the sum total of the rest, and, by being great, progressions in the state of sin suppose all the rest included; and we, by proportioning and observing the judgment to the highest, acknowledge the whole body of sin to lie under the curse, though the greatest only was named, and called upon with the voice of thunder. And yet because it sometimes happens, that, upon the violence of a great and new occasion some persons leap into such a sin as in the ordinary course of sinners uses to be the effect of an habitual and growing state, then if a judgment happens, it is clearly appropriate to that one great crime, which, as of itself it is equivalent to a vicious habit, and interrupts the acceptance of all its former contraries, so it meets with a curse, such as usually God chooses for the punishment of a whole body and state of sin. However, in making observation upon the expressions of God's anger, we must be careful that we reflect not with any bitterness or scorn upon the person of our calamitous brother, lest we make that to be an evil to him which God intends for his benefit, if the judgment be medicinal; or lest we increase the load, already great enough to sink him beneath his grave, if the judgment be intended for a final abscission.

7. Fourthly, But if the judgments descend upon *ourselves*, we are to take another course; not to inquire into particulars to find out the proportions, (for that can only be a design to part with just so much as we must needs) but to mend *all* that is amiss; for then only we can be secure to remove the Achan, when we keep nothing within us or about us that may provoke God to jealousy or wrath. And that is the proper product of holy fear, which God intended should be the first effect of all his judgments: and of this God is so careful, and yet so kind and provident, that fear might not be produced always at the expense of a great

suffering, that he hath provided for us certain prodigues of judgment, and keeps us waking with alarms, that so he might reconcile his mercies with our duties. Of this nature are epidemical diseases, not yet arrived at us; prodigious tempests, thunder and loud noises from heaven; and he that will not fear when God speaks so loud, is not yet made soft with the impresses and perpetual droppings of religion. Venerable Bede reports of St. Chad, that if a great gust of wind suddenly arose, he presently made some holy ejaculation to beg favour of God for all mankind, who might possibly be concerned in the effects of that wind; but if a storm succeeded, he fell prostrate to the earth, and grew as violent in prayer as the storm was, either at land or sea. But if God added thunder and lightning, he went to the church, and there spent all his time during the tempest in reciting litanies, psalms, and other holy prayers, till it pleased God to restore his favour, and to seem to forget his anger. And the good bishop added this reason; "Because these are the extensions and stretchings forth of God's hand, and yet he did not strike: but he that trembles not when he sees God's arm held forth to strike us, understands neither God's mercies nor his own danger; he neither knows what those horrors were which the people saw from mount Sinai, nor what the glories and amazements shall be at the great day of judgment." And if this religious man had seen Tullus Hostilius, the Roman king, and Anastasius, a Christian emperor, but a reputed heretic, struck dead with thunderbolts, and their own houses made their urns to keep their ashes in; there could have been no posture humble enough, no prayers devout enough, no place holy enough, nothing sufficiently expressive of his fear, and his humility, and his adoration, and religion to the almighty and infinite power and glorious mercy of God, sending out his emissaries to denounce war with designs of peace. A great Italian

general, seeing the sudden death of Alfonsus Duke of Ferrara, kneeled down instantly, saying, "And shall not this sight make me religious?" Three and twenty thousand fell in one night in the Assyrian camp, who were all slain for fornication. And this prodigious judgment was recorded in Scripture for our example and affrightment, that we should not entertain a crime which destroyed so numerous a body of men in the darkness of one evening. Fear, and modesty, and universal reformation, are the purposes of God's judgments upon us, or in our neighbourhood.

8. Fifthly, Concerning judgments happening to a nation or a church, the consideration is particular, because there are fewer capacities of making sins to become *national* than personal; and therefore if we understand when a sin is national, we may the rather understand the meaning of God's hand when he strikes a people. For national sins grow higher and higher, not merely according to the degree of the sin, or the intention alone, but according to the *extension*; according to its being national, so it is productive of more or less mischief to a kingdom. Customary iniquities amongst the people amount to the rank of national sins, when they are of so universal practice as to take in well nigh every particular; such as was that of Sodom, not to leave "ten righteous" in all the country: and such were the sins of the old world, which left but "eight persons" to escape the angry baptism of the flood. And such was the murmur of the children of Israel, refusing to march up to Canaan at the commandment of God, they all murmured but Caleb and Joshua; and this God in the case of the "Amalekites calls the fulfilling of their sins, and a filling up the measure of their iniquities." And hither also I reckon the defection of the ten tribes from the house of Judah, and the Samaritan schism; these caused the total extirpation of the offending people. For although

these sins were personal and private at first, yet when they come to be universal by diffusion and dissemination, and the good people remaining among them are but like drops of wine in a tun of water, of no consideration with God, save only to the preservation "of their own persons;" then, although the persons be private, yet all private or singular persons make the nation. But this hath happened but seldom in Christianity: I think indeed never, except in the case of mutinies and rebellion against their lawful prince, or the attesting violence done in unjust wars. But God only knows, and no man can say, that any sin is national by diffusion; and therefore in this case we cannot make any certain judgment or advantage to ourselves, or very rarely by observing the changes of Providence upon a people.

9. But the next above this, in order to the procuring popular judgments, is public impunity, or the not doing justice upon criminals publicly complained of and demanded, especially when the persons interested call for justice and execution of good laws, and the prince's arm is at liberty and in full strength, and there is no contrary reason in the particular instance to make compensation to the public for the omission, or no care taken to satisfy the particular. Abimelech thought he had reason to be angry with Isaac for saying Rebecca was his sister; for "one of the people might have lain with thy wife, and thou shouldst have brought evil upon us:" meaning, that the man should have escaped unpunished by reason of the mistake, which very impunity he feared might be expounded to be a countenance and encouragement to the sin. But this was no more than his fear. The case of the Benjamites comes home to this present article; for they refused to do justice upon the men that had ravished and killed the Levite's concubine: they lost twenty-five thousand in battle, their cities were destroyed, and the whole tribe almost extin-

guished. For punishing public, and great acts of injustice, is called in Scripture, "putting away the evil from the land;" because to this purpose the sword is put into the prince's hand, and he "bears the sword in vain," who ceases to protect his people: and not to punish the evil is a voluntary retention of it, unless a special case intervene, in which the prince thinks it convenient to give a particular pardon; provided this be not encouragement to others, nor without great reason, or big enough to make compensation for the particular omission, and with care to render some other satisfaction to the person injured: in all other cases of impunity, that sin becomes national by forbearing, which in the acting was personal; and it is certain the impunity is a spring of universal evils, it is no thank to the public if the best man be not as bad as the worst.

10. But there is a step beyond this, and of a more public concernment: such as the "Laws of Omri," when a nation consents to and makes ungodly statutes; when "mischief is established as a law," then the nation is involved to some purpose. When I see the people despise their governors, scorn, and rob, and disadvantage the ministers of religion, make rude addresses to God, to his temple, to his sacraments,—I look upon it as the insolency of an untaught people, who would as readily do the *contrary*, if the fear of God and the king were upon them by good examples, and precepts, and laws, and severe executions. And farther yet, when the more public and exemplary persons are without sense of religion, without a dread of majesty, without reverence to the church, without impressions of conscience and the tenderesses of a religious fear towards God; as these persons are greater in estimation of law and in their influences upon the people, so the score of the nation advances, and there is more to be paid for in popular judgments. But when iniquity or irreligion is made a sanction, and either God

must be dishonoured, or the church exauthorised, or her rites invaded by a law; then the fortune of the kingdom is at stake. No sin involves a nation so much, or is so public, so solemn an iniquity, as a wicked law. Therefore it concerns princes and states to secure the piety and innocency of their laws: and if there be any evil laws, which upon just grounds may be thought productive of God's anger, because a public misdemeanor cannot be expiated but by a public act of repentance, or a public calamity, the laws must either have their edge abated by a desuetude, or be laid asleep by a non-execution, or dismembered by contrary provisos, or have the sting drawn forth by interpretation, or else by abrogation be quite rescinded. But these are national sins within itself, or within its own body, by the act of the body (I mean) diffusive or representative, and they are like the personal sins of men in or against their own bodies in the matter of sobriety. There are others in the matter of justice, as the nation relates to other people communicating in public intercourse.

11. For as the intercourse between man and man in the actions of commutative and distributive justice is the proper matter of virtues and vices personal; so are the transactions between nation and nation against the public rules of justice, sins national directly, and in their first original, and answer to injustice between man and man. Such are, commencing war upon unjust titles, invasion of neighbours' territories, confederacies and aids upon tyrannical interest, wars against true religion or sovereignty, violation of the laws of nations, which they have consented to as the public instrument of accord and negotiation, breach of public faith, defending pirates, and the like. When a public judgment comes upon a nation, these things are to be thought upon, that we may not think ourselves acquitted by crying out against swearing and drunkenness and cheating in manufactures;

which, unless they be of universal dissemination, and made national by diffusion, are paid for upon a personal score; and the private infelicities of our lives will either expiate or punish them severely. But while the people mourn for those sins of which their low condition is capable, sins that may produce a popular fever, or perhaps the plague, where the misery dwells in cottages, and the princes often have indemnity, as it was in the case of David; yet we may not hope to appease a war, to master a rebellion, to cure the public distemperatures of a kingdom, which threaten not the people only, or the governors also, but even the government itself, unless the sins of a more public capacity be cut off by public declarations, or other acts of national justice and religion. But the duty which concerns us all in such cases is, that every man in every capacity should inquire into himself, and for his own portion of the calamity, put in his own symbol of emendation for his particular sin, and his prayers for the public interest: in which it is not safe that any private persons should descend to particular censures of the crimes of princes and states, no not towards God, unless the matter be notorious and past a question; but it is a sufficient assuagement of this part of his duty, if, when he hath set his own house in order, he would pray with indefinite significations of his charity and care of the public, that God would put it into the hearts of all whom it concerns, to endeavour the removal of the sin that hath brought the exterminating angel upon the nation. But yet there are sometimes great lines drawn by God in the expressions of his anger in some judgments upon a nation; and when the judgment is of that danger as to invade the very constitution of a kingdom, the proportions that judgments many times keep to their sins intimate, that there is some national sin, in which either by diffusion, or representation, or in the direct matter of sins, as false oaths, unjust wars, wicked confederacies, or un-

godly laws, the nation, in the *public* capacity, is delinquent.

12. For as the nation hath in sins a capacity distinct from the sins of all the people, inasmuch as the nation is united in one head, guarded by a distinct and a higher angel, as Persia by St. Michael, transacts affairs in a public right, transmits influence to all particulars from a common fountain; and hath intercourse with other collective bodies, who also distinguish from their own particulars; so likewise it hath punishments distinct from those infelicities which vex individuals, punishments proportionable to itself and to its own sins; such as change of governments, of better into worse, of monarchy into aristocracy, and so to the lowest ebb of democracy; death of princes, infant kings, foreign invasions, civil wars, a disputable title to the crown, making a nation tributary, conquest by a foreigner, and, which is worst of all, removing the candlestick from a people by extinction of the church, or that which is necessary to its conservation, the several orders and ministries of religion: and the last hath also proper sins of its own analogy; such as false articles in the public confessions of a church, schism from the catholic, public scandals, a general viciousness of the clergy, an indifferency in religion, without warmth and holy fires of zeal, and diligent pursuance of all its just and holy interests. Now in these and all parallel cases, when God by punishments hath probably marked and distinguished the crime, it concerns public persons to be the more forward and importunate in consideration of public irregularities: and for the private also not to neglect their own particulars; for by that means, although not certainly, yet probably, they may secure themselves from falling in the public calamity. It is not infallibly sure that holy persons shall not be smitten by the destroying angel; for God in such deaths hath many ends of mercy, and some of providence, to serve: but

such private and personal emendations and devotions are the greatest securities of the men against the judgment, or the evil of it; preserving them in this life, or waiving them over to a better. Thus many of the Lord's champions did fall in battle, and the armies of the Benjamites did twice prevail upon the juster people of all Israel; and the Greek empire hath declined and shrunk under the fortune and power of the Ottoman family; and the holy land, which was twice possessed by Christian princes, is now in the dominion of unchristened Saracens; and in the production of these alterations many a gallant and pious person suffered the evils of war, and the change of an untimely death.

13. But the way for the whole nation to proceed in cases of epidemical diseases, wars, great judgments, and popular calamities, is to do in the *public* proportion, the same that every man is to do for his *private*; by public acts of justice, repentance, fastings, pious laws, and execution of just and religious edicts, making peace, quitting unjust interests, declaring publicly against a crime, protesting in behalf of the contrary virtue or religion: and to this also every man, as he is a member of the body politic, must co-operate; that by a repentance in diffusion help may come, as well as by a sin of universal dissemination the plague was hastened and invited the rather. But in these cases all the work of discerning and pronouncing concerning the cause of the judgment, as it must be without asperity, and only for designs of correction and emendation, so it must be done by kings and prophets, and the assistance of other public persons, to whom the public is committed. Joshua cast lots upon Achan, and discovered the public trouble in a private instance; and of old the prophets, some had it in commission to reprove the popular iniquity of nations, and the confederate sins of kingdoms: and in this Christianity altered nothing. And

when this is done modestly, prudently, humbly, and penitently, oftentimes the tables turn immediately, but always in due time; and a great alteration in a kingdom becomes the greatest blessing in the world, and fastens the church, or the crown, or the public peace, in bands of great continuance and security: and it may be the next age shall feel the benefits of our suffering and repentance. And therefore, as we must endeavour to secure it, so we must not be too decretory in the case of others, or disconsolate or diffident in our own, when it may so happen, that all succeeding generations shall see that God pardoned us and loved us even when he smote us. Let us all learn to fear and walk humbly. The churches of Laodicea and the Colossians suffered a great calamity within a little while after the Spirit of God had sent them *two* epistles by the ministry of St. Paul; their cities were buried in an earthquake: and yet we have reason to think they were churches beloved of God, and congregations of holy people.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal and powerful God, thou just and righteous governor of the world, who callest all orders of men by precepts, promises, and threatenings, by mercies and by judgments, teach us to admire and adore all the wisdom, the effects and infinite varieties of thy providence; and makes us to dispose ourselves so by obedience, by repentance, by all the manners of holy living, that we may never provoke thee to jea-

lousy, much less to wrath and indignation against us. Keep far from us the sword of the destroying angel, and let us never perish in the public expresses of thy wrath, in diseases epidemical, with the furies of war, with calamitous, sudden and horrid accidents, with unusual diseases; unless that our so strange fall be more for thy glory and our eternal benefit; *and then thy will be done.* We beg thy grace, that we may cheerfully conform to thy holy will and pleasure. Lord, open our understandings, that we may know the meaning of thy voice, and the signification of thy language, when thou speakest from heaven in signs and judgments; and let a holy fear so soften our spirits, and an intense love so inflame and sanctify our desires, that we may apprehend every intimation of thy pleasure at its first and remotest and most obscure representment, that so we may with repentance go out to meet thee, and prevent the expresses of thine anger. Let thy restraining grace and the observation of the issues of thy justice so allay our spirits, that we be not severe and forward in condemning others, nor backward in passing sentence upon ourselves. Make us to obey thy voice described in holy Scripture, to tremble at thy voice expressed in wonders and great effects of providence, to condemn none but ourselves, nor to enter into the recesses of thy sanctuary, or search the forbidden records of predestination; but that we may read our duty in the pages of Revelation, not in the labels of accidental effects; that thy judgments may confirm thy word, and thy word teach us our duty, and we by such excellent instruments may enter in and grow up in the ways of godliness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SECTION XV.

OF THE ACCIDENTS HAPPENING FROM THE DEATH OF LAZARUS, UNTILL THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF JESUS.

4. WHILE Jesus was in Galilee, messengers came to him from Martha and her sister Mary, that he would hasten into Judæa to Bethany, to relieve the sickness and imminent danger of their brother Lazarus. But he deferred his going till Lazarus was dead; purposing to give a great proof of his divinity, power, and mission, by a glorious miracle; and to give God glory, and to receive reflections of the glory upon himself. For after he had "stayed two days," he called his disciples to go with him into Judæa, telling them, that "Lazarus was dead," but he would "raise him out of that sleep of death." But by the time Jesus was arrived at Bethany, "he found that Lazarus had been dead four days," and now near to putrefaction. But when Martha and Mary met him, weeping their pious tears for their dead brother, Jesus suffered the passions of piety and humanity, and wept; distilling that precious liquor into the grave of Lazarus, watering the dead plant, that it might spring into a new life, and raise his head above the ground.

2. When Jesus had by his words of comfort and institution strengthened the faith of the two mourning sisters, and commanded "the stone to be removed" from the grave, he made an address of adoration and eucharist to his father, confessing his perpetual readiness to hear him, and then cried out, "Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth" from his bed of darkness with his night-clothes on him, whom

when the apostles had unloosed at the command of Jesus, he went to Bethany: "and many that were present believed on him;" but others, wondering and malicious, "went and told the Pharisees the story of the miracle; who upon that advice called their great council, whose great and solemn cognizance was of the greater causes of prophets, of kings, and of the holy law. At this great assembly it was that Caiaphas, the high priest, prophesied that it was "expedient one should die for the people." And thence they determined the death of Jesus. But He, knowing they had passed a decretory sentence against him, "retired to the city Ephraim in the tribe of Judah near the desert," where he stayed a few days, till the approximation of the feast of Easter.

3. Against which feast when Jesus with his disciples was going to Jerusalem, he told them what the event of the journey would be; that the "Jews should deliver him to the Gentiles," that they "should scourge him, and mock him, and crucify him, and the third day he should rise again. After which discourse the mother of Zebedee's children begged of Jesus for her two sons, that "one of them might sit at his right hand, the other at the left, in his kingdom." For no discourses of his passion, or intimations of the mysteriousness of his kingdom, could yet put them into a right understanding of their condition. But Jesus, whose heart and thoughts were full of fancy and appre-

hensions of the neighbour passion, gave them answer in proportion to his present conceptions and their future condition. For if they desired the honours of his kingdom, such as they were, they should have them, unless themselves did decline them; they "should drink of his cup," and dip in his lavatory, and be "washed with his baptism," and "sit in his kingdom," if the heavenly "Father had prepared it for them;" but the donation of that, immediately, was an issue of divine election, and predestination, and was only competent to them, who, by holy living and patient suffering, put themselves into a disposition of becoming vessels of election.

4. But as Jesus in this journey came near Jericho, he cures "a blind man, who sat begging by the way-side:" and "espying Zaccheus, the chief of the publicans, upon a tree, (that he being low of stature, might upon that advantage of station see Jesus passing by) he invited himself to his house; who received him with gladness," and repentance of his crimes, purging his conscience, and filling his heart and

house with joy and sanctity; for, immediately upon the arrival of the master at his house, he offered restitution to all persons whom he had injured, and satisfaction, and half of his remaining estate he "gave to the poor," and so gave the fairest entertainment to Jesus, who brought along with him "salvation to his house." There it was that he spake the parable of the king who concurred divers talents* to his servants, and having at his return exacted an account, rewarded them who had improved their bank, and been faithful in their trust, with rewards proportionable to their capacity and improvement; but the negligent servant, who had not meliorated his stock, was punished with ablegation and confinement to outer darkness. And from hence sprang up that dogmatical proposition, which is mysterious and determined in Christianity, "To him that hath shall be given; and from him that hath not shall be taken away even what he hath. After this, going forth of Jericho, he cured two blind men upon the way.

* Whatever gifts of nature, providence, or grace may be represented by the talents, the grand object of the parable itself is, obviously, to commend and enforce a watchful improvement of them all. It is, also, equally obvious that, whatever may be the right method of improving our talents, or advantages, one chief motive to a due improvement of them, ought to be drawn from the certainty of Christ's coming to reckon with us, and from the uncertainty of the precise time of that solemn reckoning.

This weighty motive to watchful improvement is implied in the parable itself: for, although that Master did not return to reckon with his servants until "after a long time," he did not tell them, when he left, that he would be long absent. Nor is this all. The very basis, as well as the whole bearing of the parable, is, the solemn injunction, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh: Nor is this all: for as the parable is introduced by a solemn reference to the day of judgment, so it is followed up by a solemn description of the process and principles of final judgment. Its preface is, "The Son of Man shall come:" its peroration is, "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory &c. Matt. xxv." Such being the connection and occasion of the parable of the talents, it is self-evident that, by talents, is meant all that we are responsible for at the day of judgment, or every ground of personal accountability, whether natural, moral, or spiritual. For, as we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to give an account of our deeds; so

that account must be rendered according to all the advantages we may now derive from the mercy-seat of Christ. The entire and eternal grounds of our personal accountability, are thus the talents we have to improve now, and to account for then. It is not therefore a local, a single, nor a singular doctrine, that is taught in the Parable; but the whole system of human responsibility under the gospel.

Now that responsibility is founded upon our rational and immortal nature: it is increased by our providential advantages; is completed and confirmed by our gospel privileges. And of each of these eternal grounds of accountability, each of us has enough to render us inexorable, if we turn out "unprofitable servants."

I. Our personal accountability at the judgment seat is founded on our possession of a rational and immortal nature.

Yes, this is the original and immutable basis of our responsibility. For without a rational nature, the gospel would be of no more use to us than it is to animals or insects: and without an immortal nature, the gospel would be an inexplicable thing.

Whatever truth there is in this remark proves, that we should be accountable to God, even if there were neither providence nor gospel in our world. They increase and confirm our accountability; but they do not create it. We should be amenable at a judgment-seat, even if there were no mercy-seat. Not, of course, to anything like the same extent as we are now; and not, certainly, to the judgment-seat of the Son, as Christ; but still amenable to all the extent that reason and

immortality legitimately involve. Accordingly the Heathen, who have neither the gospel nor the law, will be judged by the natural and inevitable laws of mind and conscious immortality.

Such is the value of reason, in the estimation of God. Dashed, and debased, and weakened, and perverted as it is by the fall and sin, the Author of reason will judge reason;—the Father of conscience will reckon with conscience, on the same day, and from the same throne, (though not by the same rule) as with us.

Now as the Heathen are thus accountable for their talents without either the moral law, or the glorious gospel, we, having both, are surely, and deeply, and individually, responsible, however our natural talents may differ in number or degree: for the fulness of the gospel to supply all our spiritual wants, and the promise of the Holy Spirit to help all our moral infirmities, form more than a compensation for any difference there is between one mind and another, as to vigour or versatility of talent. The weakest mind, with the gospel is capable of serving and glorifying God, both more and better, than the strongest mind, without the gospel. I had rather, infinitely rather, have just sense enough to understand there is a Saviour, and that I need a Saviour, than have, without this knowledge, all the philosophy of Plato, the eloquence of Cicero, the science of Newton, and the genius of Milton.

On this ground, then, I appeal to those who complain of a weak understanding, and of a weaker memory; and put forward these defects as excuses for neglecting the great salvation. It will not do:—the plea is not valid, unless you can prove against yourself hereditary insanity or idiocy. You may not have five talents, nor two talents, to become religious with, but if you have sense enough to understand the simple fact that the Son of God died to save sinners, you have one natural talent, quite sufficient, so far as mental talent is required in the matter, to render your neglect entirely and eternally inexcusable.

God's salvation is too great, too free; and God is too willing to bestow it on us; and it cost the Saviour too much to procure it; and it is too much in the hand of the Holy Spirit, to be a thing that only great talents could get any saving good from. It is, indeed, worthy of the powers of the mightiest minds to study, and its full glories are beyond the grasp of all finite comprehension; but it is a salvation as much intended for, and adapted to, ordinary minds, and even to weak minds, as to guilty consciences on earth, or as to angelic intellect in heaven. "The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein."

II. Our personal accountability at the judgment seat, is increased by our providential advantages, however our lots in life may vary.

In this view of the talents, the independent have the five: the trading, the two; and the labouring, the one. And there is a great difference between the lot of a tradesman or merchant, and that of a man of fortune; and an immense difference between the wages of a labouring man, and the income of a good business. Whoever would confound these lots in life, or treat them as immaterial distinctions, reflects on providence, and outrages common sense. The distinctions exist; and God made them, whatever we may make of them. There they are, whatever they mean or involve! The world itself is dealt out by Providence in portions of five, two and one; and, in similar

proportions, all the trade of the country is measured out and maintained. And we have not time to alter this arrangement, even if we had the power. We should all be dead, long before any plan of equalization could operate a change.

It is, therefore, with things as they are; with providence as it is, in this matter at least, that we have to do. My ministerial business is with the proportions as I find them; and your responsibilities with the proportions as you have them.

Now, if the lowest lot, the one talent of providence, do not exempt, but actually bind the possessor of one natural talent, to profit by the gospel, I need not say that all who are placed in opulent or easy circumstances, are absolutely bound to profit by it, whatever be their degrees of intellect or education. I shall, therefore, confine my remarks to the case of the poorest.

Even their lot does not exclude them from all the means of grace, nor from any of the promises of grace.

It exempts them from many of the temptations which divide and divert the heart from eternal things.

It is a plain intimation from God, that, at present, a better lot would have worse effect on the heart than poverty has.

It is not found to prevent salvation nor holiness in any case where they are truly sought for.

The number which no man could number, were all *one talent* men, in respect of providence, for they came out of great tribulation.

III. Our personal accountability is completed and confirmed by our possession of the glorious gospel.

It is, to our natural talents, and to our providential resources what the public exchange of Jerusalem was to the money talents of the servants in the parable, the market for improving them in. In making this remark, I do not forget that it is the general scope of a parable, and not its minute details, which should guide and ought to govern the interpretation of it. In this case, however, the implied market, is of as much importance as the expressed money; whether the talents were gold or silver. They could not have doubled themselves but in a commercial town. Accordingly the responsibility of the servants arose as much from the good market, as from the good money. This is more than implied in ver. 27, where the master acknowledges that even the bankers gave a high rate of interest. This feature of the case is too much overlooked. Accordingly, we call the passage the parable of the talents; and so it truly and intentionally is; but it is just as truly and intentionally the parable of the market: for how little could have been made of the money at Dán or Beersheba, where there was no exchange?

In like manner, how little could be made of any degree of natural or providential talent, apart from the gospel. As talent, it might, indeed, be improved by exercise. Mental power often doubled itself by study, in Athens and Rome, before the gospel; but it never arose to spiritual discernment, never to high moral principle, nor even to the discovery of truth, even when Socrates and Plato lectured. They had plenty of talent then: but they had not divine truth to exercise it upon, nor divine influence to give truth effect: whereas we, under the gospel, have both within our reach: for the gospel is not more surely given to us, than the influences of the Holy Spirit are promised to us. Consider, then,

I. How our minds may be improved under the Gospel.

What an improvement it would be, were we only as careful

of our souls, as we are of our bodies? As wise for eternity as for time? As intent upon treasure in heaven as on earth? As willing to please God, as to please them we love best? As ready to believe God, as to rely on the word of a friend? As prompt and hearty in applying to the Saviour for mercy and grace, as to the physician when we are afraid of death?

This would be doubling our talents! And, surely the salvation, the health, the eternal happiness of our immortal souls, deserves this application of our talents? Well! may we store our memory with truth which can make wise unto salvation. Well! our judgment with principles which fit for heaven. Well! our hearts with hopes which can unseat death and disarm the grave. Well! our conscience with principles which can both pacify and purify them. Well! our imagination with prospects of glory and immortality. Well! our whole soul and spirit, with things which thus belong to, and even involve our everlasting peace."

Now this is the talent-market, for minds of all orders of strength or weakness. No capital is too large or too small to be profitably employed here. And then—there are no losses—no risks—no fluctuations—no monopolies in this market. Free trade—sure trade—successful trade is chartered here—to all: "for, if any man lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." Begging (however) not buying, is the grand principle of business in this market.

II. How our providential means of doing good may be improved under the gospel.

Its religious and benevolent institutions open a field for all kinds of talent and improve every gift and grace which they employ.

Its missions deserve support, and amply repay it.

Its fellowship is worth maintaining at any expense.

Money is a talent well laid out in the cause of God.

The influence of every man, if lent to God will increase, whenever it is used without ostentation.—*EDITOR.*

5. "Six days before Easter Jesus came to Bethany, where he was feasted by Martha and Mary, and accompanied by Lazarus, who "sat at the table with Jesus." But "Mary brought a pound of nard pistic," and as formerly she had done, again "anoints the feet of Jesus, and fills the house with the odour," till God himself smelled thence a savour of a sweet smelling sacrifice. But Judas Iscariot, the thief and the traitor, repined at the vanity of the expense (as he pretended) because it might have been "sold for three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor." But Jesus in his reply taught us that there is an opportunity for actions of religion as well as of charity. "Mary did this against the burial of Jesus;" and her religion was accepted by him, to whose honours the holocaust of love and the oblations of alms-deeds

are in their proper seasons direct actions of worship and duty. But at this meeting "there came many Jews to see Lazarus, who was raised from death, as well as to see Jesus:" and because by occasion of his resurrection "many of them believed on Jesus, therefore the Pharisees "deliberated about putting him to death." But God in his glorious providence was pleased to preserve him as a trumpet of his glories, and a testimony of the miracle, thirty days after the death of Jesus.

6. "The next day," being the fifth day before the passover, "Jesus came to the foot of the mount of olives," and "sent his disciples to Bethpage, a village in the neighbourhood," commanding them to "unloose an ass and a colt, and bring them to him, and to tell the owners it was done for the master's use; and they did so;" and when they brought the ass to Jesus, he rides on him to Jerusalem; and the people, having notice of his approach, "took branches of palm-trees, and went out to meet him, strewing branches and garments in the way, crying out, Hosanna to the son of David:" which was a form of exclamation used to the honour of God, and in great solemnities, and signifies adoration to the son of David by the right of carrying branches; which, when they used in procession about their altars, they used to pray, "Lord, save us, Lord prosper us," which hath occasioned the reddition of Hoschannah, to be amongst some, that prayer which they repeated at the carrying of the Hoschannah, as if itself did signify, "Lord, save us." But this honour was so great and unusual to be done even to kings, that the Pharisees, knowing this to be an appropriate manner of address to God, said one to another by way of wonder, "Hear ye what these men say;" For they were troubled to hear the people revere him as a God.

7. When Jesus from the mount of Olives "beheld Jerusalem, he wept over it," and fore-

told great sadnesses and infelicities futurely contingent to it; which not only happened in the sequel of the story according to the main issues and significations of this prophecy, but even to minutes and circumstances it was verified. For in the mount of Olives, where Jesus shed tears over perishing Jerusalem, the Romans first pitched their tents when they came to its final overthrow. From thence descending to the city he went into the temple; and still the acclamations followed him, till the Pharisees were ready to burst with the noises abroad, and the tumults of envy and scorn within, and by observing that all their endeavours to suppress his glories were but like clapping their hands to veil the sun, and that, in despite of all their stratagems, the whole nation was become disciple to the glorious Nazarene. And there "he cured certain persons that were blind and lame."

8. But whilst he abode at "Jerusalem, certain Greeks, who came to the feast to worship," made their address to Philip, that they might be brought to Jesus. "Philip tells Andrew, and they both tell Jesus:" who, having admitted them, discoursed many things concerning his passion, and then prayed a petition, which is the end of his own sufferings, and of all human actions, and the purpose of the whole creation, "Father, glorify thy name." To which he was answered by "a voice from heaven, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." But neither this, nor the whole series of miracles that he did, the mercies, the cures, nor the divine discourses, could gain the faith of all the Jews, who were determined by their human interest; for "many of the rulers who believed on him durst not confess him, because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Then Jesus again exhorted all men "to believe on him, that so they might in the same act believe on God; that they may approach unto the light, and not abide in darkness; that they might obey the commandments of the Father,

whose express charge it was, that Jesus should preach this gospel; and that they might not be judged at the last day by the word which they have rejected, which word to all its observers is everlasting life. After which sermon retiring to Bethany, he abode there all night.

9. On the morrow returning to Jerusalem, on the way being hungry he passed by a fig tree, where expecting fruit he found none, and cursed the fig tree, which by the next day was dried up and withered. Upon occasion of which preternatural event Jesus discoursed of the power of faith, and its power to produce miracles. But on this occasion others, the disciples of Jesus in after ages, have pleased themselves with fancies and imperfect descants, as that he cursed this tree in mystery and secret intendment, it having been the tree in the eating whose fruit Adam, prevaricating the divine law, made an inlet to sin, which brought in death, and the sadnesses of Jesus's passion. But Jesus having entered the city came into the temple, and preached the gospel; and the chief priests and scribes questioned his commission, and by what authority he did those things. But Jesus promising to answer them, if they would declare their opinions concerning John's baptism, which they durst not for fear of displeasing the people, or throwing dirt in their own faces, was acquitted of his obligation, by their declining the proposition.

10. "But there he reproveth the Pharisees and rulers, by the parable of two sons; the first whereof said to his father, he would not obey, but repented, and did his command; the second gave good words, but did nothing: meaning, that persons of the greatest improbability were more heartily converted than they whose outside seemed to have appropriated religion to the labels of their frontlets. He added a parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, who killed the servants sent to demand the fruits, and at last the son himself, that they might

invade the inheritance; but made a sad commination to all who should either stumble at this stone, or on whom this stone should fall. After which, and some other reprehensions, which he so veiled in parable that it might not be expounded to be calumny or declamation, although such sharp sermons had been spoken in the people's hearing, but yet so transparently, that themselves might see their own iniquity in those modest and just representations, the Pharisees would fain have seized him, but they durst not for the people, but resolved, if they could, "to entangle him in his talk;" and therefore "sent out spies who should pretend" sanctity and veneration of his person, who with a goodly insinuating preface, that "Jesus regarded no man's person, but spake the word of God" with much simplicity and justice, desired to know if it were "lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not." A question which was of great dispute, because of the numerous sect of the Galileans, who denied it, and of the affections of the people, who loved their money, and their liberty, and the privileges of their nation. And now in all probability he shall fall under the displeasure of the people, or of Cæsar. But Jesus called to "see a penny;" and finding it to be superscribed with Cæsar's image, with incomparable wisdom he brake their snare, and established an evangelical proposition for ever, saying, "Give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

11. Having so excellently and so much to their wonder answered the Pharisees, the Sadducees bring their great objection to him against the resurrection, by putting case of a woman married to seven husbands, and "whose wife should she be in the resurrection?" thinking that to be an impossible state, which engages upon such seeming incongruities, that a woman should at once be wife to seven men. But Jesus first answered their objection, telling them, that all those relations whose foundation

is in the imperfections and passions of flesh and blood, and duties here below, shall cease in that state, which is so spiritual, that it is like to the condition of angels, amongst whom there is no difference of sex, no cognations, no genealogies or derivation from one another; and then, by a new argument, proved the resurrection, by one of God's appellatives, who did then delight to be called "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for since God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," unto him even these men are alive; and if so, then either they now exercise acts of life, and therefore shall be restored to their bodies, that their actions may be complete, and they not remain in a state of imperfection to all eternity; or if they be alive, and yet cease from operation, they shall be much rather raised up to a condition which shall actuate and make perfect their present capacities and dispositions, lest a power and inclination should for ever be in the root, and never rise up to fruit or herbage, and so be an eternal vanity, like an old bud, or an eternal child.

12. After this, the Pharisees being well pleased, not that Jesus spake so excellently, but that the Sadducees were confuted, came to him, asking, "which was the great commandment," and some other things, more out of curiosity than pious desires of satisfaction. But at last Jesus was pleased to ask them concerning "Christ, whose son he was. They answered, the son of David:" but he replying, "how then doth David call him Lord? (the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, &c.,)" they had nothing to answer. But Jesus then gave his disciples caution against the pride, the hypocrisy, and the oppression of the scribes and Pharisees; and commended the poor widow's oblation of her two mites into the treasury, it being a great love in a little print, for it was "all her living." All this was spoken in the temple: the goodly stones of which when

the apostles beheld with wonder, being white and firm, twenty cubits in length, twelve in breadth, eight in depth, as Josephus reports, Jesus prophesies the destruction of the place; concerning which prediction, when the apostles, being with him at the mount of Olives, asked him privately concerning the time and the signs of so sad event, he discoursed largely "of his coming to judgment against that city, and interweaved predictions of the universal judgment of all the world;" of which this, though very sad, was but a small adumbration: adding precepts of watchfulness, and standing in preparation with hearts filled with grace, our lamps always shining, that when the bridegroom shall come we may be ready to enter in; which was intended in the parable of the five wise virgins:" and concluded his sermon with a narrative of his passion, foretelling that within two days he should be crucified.

13. Jesus descended from the mount, and came to Bethany, and turning into the house of Simon the leper, Mary Magdalen having been reproved by Judas for spending ointment upon Jesus' feet, it being so unaccustomed and large a profusion, thought now to speak her love once more, and trouble no body, and therefore she "poured ointment on his sacred head," believed that, being a pompousness of a more accustomed festivity, would be indulged to the expressions of her affection: but now all the disciples murmured, wondering at the prodigiousness of the woman's religion, great enough to consume a province in the overflowings of her thankfulness and duty. But Jesus now also entertained the sincerity of her miraculous love, adding this prophecy, that "were the gospel should be preached," there also a record of this act should be kept, as a perpetual monument of her piety, and an attestation of his divinity, who could fortel future contingencies; christianity receiving the greatest argument from that which St. Peter calls "the surer word of prophecy," meaning it

to be greater than the testimony of miracles, not easy to be dissembled by impure spirits, and whose efficacy should descend to all ages: for this prophecy shall for ever be fulfilling, and being every day verified, does every day preach the divinity of Christ's person and of his institution.

14. "Two days before the passover" the scribes and Pharisees called a council to contrive crafty ways of destroying Jesus, they not daring to do it by open violence. Of which meeting when Judas Iscariot had notice, (for those assemblies were public and notorious) he ran from Bethany, and offered himself to betray his Master to them, if they would give him a considerable reward. "They agreed for thirty pieces of silver." Of what value each piece was is uncertain; but their own nation hath given a rule, that when a piece of silver is named in the pentateuch it signifies a sicle; if it be named in the prophets, it signifies a pound; if in the other writings of the Old Testament, it signifies a talent: this therefore being alleged out of the prophet Jeremy, by one of the evangelists, it is probable the price at which Judas sold his Lord was thirty pounds weight of silver; a goodly price for the Saviour of the world to be prized at, by his undiscerning and unworthy countrymen.

15. The next day was "the first day of unleavened bread," on which it was necessary they should kill the passover; therefore Jesus sent Peter and John, to the city to a certain man, whom they should find carrying a pitcher of water to his house; him they should follow, and there prepare the passover. They went and found the man in the same circumstances, and prepared for Jesus and his family, who, at the even, came to celebrate the passover. It was the house of John surnamed Mark, which had always been open to this blessed family, where he was pleased to finish his last supper, and the mysteriousness of the vespers of his passion.

16. When evening was come, Jesus stood with his disciples and ate the paschal lamb; after which "he girt himself with a towel, and taking a bason washed the feet of his disciples," not only by the ceremony, but in his discourses, instructing them in the doctrine of humility, which the Master by his so great condescension to his disciples had made sacred, and imprinted the lesson in lasting characters by making it symbolical. But Peter was unwilling to be washed by his Lord, until he was told he must renounce his part in him unless he were washed; which option being given to Peter, he cried out, "not my feet only, but my hands and my head." But Jesus said the ablution of the feet was sufficient for the purification of the whole man; relating to the custom of those countries who used to go to supper immediately from the baths, who therefore were sufficiently clean save only on their feet, by reason of the dust contracted in their passage from the baths to the dining-rooms; from which when by the hospitable master of the house they were caused to be cleansed, they needed no more ablution: and by it Jesus, passing from the letter to the spirit, meant, that the body of sin was washed in the baths of baptism; and afterwards, if we remained in the same state of purity, it was only necessary to purge away the filth contracted in our passage from the font to the altar; and then we are clean all over, when the baptismal state is unaltered, and the little adherences of imperfection and passions are also washed off.

17. But after the manducation of the paschal lamb it was the custom of the nation to sit down to a second supper, in which they ate herbs and unleavened bread, the major-domo first dipping his morsel, and then the family; after which the father brake bread into pieces, and distributed a part to every one of the guests, and first drinking himself, gave to the rest the chalice filled with wine, according to the age and dignity of the person, adding to each dis-

tribution a form of benediction proper to the mystery, which was eucharistical and commemorative of their deliverance from Egypt. This supper Jesus being to celebrate, changed the forms of benediction, turned the ceremony into mystery, and gave his body and blood in sacrament and religious configuration; so instituting the venerable sacrament which from the time of its institution is called "the Lord's Supper:" which rite Jesus commanded the apostles to perpetuate in commemoration of him their Lord until his second coming. And this was the first delegation of a perpetual ministry which Jesus made to his apostles, in which they were to be succeeded in all generations of the church.

18. But "Jesus being troubled in spirit told his apostles that one of them should betray him;" which prediction he made, that they might not be scandalized at the sadness of objection of the passion, but be confirmed in their belief, by seeing so great demonstration of his wisdom and spirit of prophecy. The disciples were all troubled at this sad arrest, "looking one on another, and doubting of whom he spake but they beckoned to the beloved disciple, leaning on Jesus' breast, that he might ask:" for they, who knew their own innocence and infirmity, were desirous to satisfy their curiosity, and to be rid of their indetermination and their fear. But Jesus being asked gave *them* a sign, and a sop to Judas, commanding him to do what he list speedily; for Jesus was extremely straitened till he had drunk the chalice off, and accomplished his mysterious and afflictive baptism. After "Judas receiving the sop, the devil entered into him, and Judas went forth immediately, it being now night."

19. When he was gone out, Jesus began his farewell sermon, rarely mixed of sadness and joys, and studded with mysteries as with emeralds, discoursing "of the glorification of God in his Son, and of those glories which the

Father had prepared for him; of his sudden departure, and his migration to a place whither they could not come yet, but afterwards they should; meaning, first, to death, and then to glory: commanding them to love one another; and foretelling to Peter, (who made confident protests that he would die with his master) that "before the cock should crow twice, he should deny him thrice." But lest he should afflict them with too sad representations of his present condition, he comforts them with the comforts of faith, with the intendments of his departure to prepare places in heaven for them, whither they might come by him, who is "the way, the truth, and the life;" adding a promise in order to their present support and future felicities, that "if they should ask of God any thing in his name, they should receive it;" and upon condition they would love him, and keep his commandments, he would pray for the Holy Ghost to come upon them, to supply his room, to furnish them with proportionable comforts, to enable them with great ease, to "lead them into all truth," and to abide with them for ever. Then arming them against future persecutions, giving them divers holy precepts, discoursing of his emanation from the Father, and of the necessity of his departure, he gave them his blessing, and prayed for them; and then, having sung a hymn, which was part of the great hallelujah beginning at Psalm cxxxvi, "Israel came out of Egypt," and ending at Psalm cxlviii, "and ending at Psalm cxlviii," inclusively, went forth with his disciples, and the brook Cedron unto the mount of Olives to a village called Gethsemane, where there was a garden, into which he entered to pray together with his disciples.

29. But taking Peter, James, and John apart with him about a stone's cast from the rest, he began to be exceeding sorrowful and sad, even unto death. For now he saw the ingredients of his bitter draught pouring into the chalice, and the sight was full of horror and amazement; he

therefore, "fell on his face, and prayed, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." In this prayer he fell into so sad an agony, that the pains, inflicted by his Father's wrath, and made worse by his own apprehension, were so great, that a sweat distilled from his sacred body as great and conglobated as "drops of blood;" and God, who heard his prayer, but would not answer him in kind, sent an angel to comfort him in the sadness which he was pleased not to take away. But knowing that the drinking this cup was the great end of his coming into the world, he laid aside all his own interests, and divested himself of the affections of flesh and blood, "willing his Father's will;" and because his Father commanded, he in defiance of sense and passion, was desirous to suffer all our pains. But as when two seas meet, the billows contest in ungentle embraces, and make violent noises, till having wearied themselves into smaller waves and dissipated drops, they run quietly into one stream. So did the spirit and nature of Jesus assault each other with disagreeing interests and disengaging disputations, till the earnestness of the contention was diminished by the demonstrations of the Spirit and the prevailings of grace, which the sooner got the victory, because they were not to contest with an unsanctified or rebellious nature, but with a body of affections which had no strong desires, but their own preservation; and therefore "Jesus said thrice," and every time the same prayer, that "if it were possible, the cup might pass from him," and thrice made an act of resignation, and in the intervals, "came and found his apostles asleep," gently chiding their inconsiderateness, and warning them to "watch and pray, that they enter not into temptation;" till the time that the traitor "came with a multitude, armed with swords and staves, from the priests and elders of the people," to apprehend him.



21. Judas gave them the opportunity of the night; that was all the advantage they had by him, because they durst not seize him by day, for fear of the people; and he signified the person of his Master to the soldiers by a kiss, and an address of seeming civility. But when they came towards him "Jesus said, Whom seek ye? They said, Jesus of Nazareth. He said, I am he." But there was a divinity upon him, that they could not seize him at first. But as a wave climbing a rock is beaten back, and scattered into members, till falling down it creeps with gentle waftings and kisses the feet of the stony mountain, and so encircles it; so the soldiers coming at first with a rude attempt, were twice repelled by the glory of his person, till they falling at his feet, were at last admitted to the seizure of his body, having by those involuntary prostrations confessed his power greater than theirs, and that the lustre and influence of a God, are greater than the violences and rudenesses of soldiers. And still they, like weak eyes, durst not behold the glory of this sun, till a cloud, like a dark veil, did interrupt the emissions of his glories, they could not seize upon him, till they had thrown a veil upon his holy face: which, although it was a custom of the Easterlings, and of the Roman empire generally; yet in this case was violence and necessity, because a certain impetuosity and vigourousness of spirit and divinity issuing from his holy face made them to take sanctuary in darkness, and to throw a veil over him in that dead time of a sad and dismal night. But Peter, a stout Galilean, bold and zealous, attempted a rescue, and "smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear;" but Jesus rebuked the intemperance of his passion, and commanded him to put up his sword, saying, "all they that strike with the sword shall perish with the sword;" so putting a bridle upon the illegal inflictions and expressions of anger or revenge from an

incompetent authority. But "Jesus touched Malchus's ear, and cured it."

22. When Jesus had yielded himself into their power, and was now "led away by the chief priests, captains of the temple, elders of the people," and soldiers, who all came in combination and covenant to surprise him, his disciples fled; and John the Evangelist, who with grief and an overrunning fancy had forgot to lay aside his upper garment, which in festivals they are used to put on, began to make escape; but being arrested by his linen upon his bare body, was forced to leave that behind him, that himself might escape his Master's danger: for now was verified the prophetic saying, "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But Peter followed afar off;" and the greatness of John's love, when he had mastered the first inconsiderations of his fear, made him to return awhile after into the high priest's hall.

23. "Jesus was first led to Annas," who was the prince of the sanhedrim, and had cognizance of prophets and public doctrines; who, therefore, "inquired of Jesus concerning his doctrines and his discipline." But he answered, that his doctrine had been public or popular, that he never taught in conventicles; and and therefore referred him to the testimony of all the people. For which free answer, "a servant standing by smote him on the face;" and Jesus meekly asked him what evil he had done. But Annas, without the seventy assessors could judge nothing, and therefore "sent him bound to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year," president of the rites of the temple, as the other high priest was of the great council. Thither Peter came, and had admission by the means of another disciple, supposed to be John, who, having sold his possessions in Galilee to Caiaphas, came and dwelt near Mount Sion, but was by intervention of that bargain made "known to the high priest, and

brought Peter into the house;" where when Peter was challenged three times by the servants to be a Galilean, and of Jesus's family, he denied and forswore it; till Jesus, looking back, reminded him of his prediction, and the foulness of the crime, and the cock crew, for it was now the second cock-crowing after ten of the clock in the fourth watch. "And Peter went out, and wept bitterly," that he might cleanse his soul, washing off the foul stains he had contracted in his shameful perjury and denying of his Lord. And it is reported of the same holy person, that ever after, when he heard the cock crow, he wept, remembering the old instrument of his conversion, and his own unworthiness, for which he never ceased to do actions of sorrow and sharp repentance.

24. On the morning the council was to assemble; and whilst Jesus was detained in expectation of it, the servants mocked him, and did all actions of affront and ignoble despite to his sacred head: and because the question was whether he were a prophet, "they covered his eyes, and smote him" in derision, calling on him to "prophecy who smote him." But "in the morning, when the high priests and rulers of the people were assembled, they sought false witness against Jesus, but found none to purpose;" they railed boldly, and could prove nothing; they accused vehemently, and the allegations were of such things as were no crimes, and the greatest article which the united diligence of all their malice could pretend was, that "he said he would destroy the temple, and in three days build it up again." But Jesus neither answered this nor any other of their vainer allegations; for the witnesses destroyed each other's testimony by their disagreeing: till at last Caiaphas, who to verify his prophecy, and to satisfy his ambition, and to bait his envy, was furiously determined Jesus should die, "adjured him by the living God, to say whether he were the Christ, the

Son of the living God." Jesus knew his design to be an inquisition of death, not of piety or curiosity; yet, because "his hour was now come," he openly affirmed it without any expedient to elude the high priest's malice, or to decline the question.

25. When Caiaphas heard the saying, he accused Jesus of blasphemy, and pretended an apprehension so tragical, that he overacted his wonder and feigned detestation; for he rent his garments, (which was the interjection of the country, and custom of the nation, but forbidden to the high priest) and called presently to sentence: and, as it was agreed beforehand, "they all condemned him as guilty of death," and as far as they had power inflicted it; for they "beat him with their fists, smote him with the palms of their hands, spit upon him," and abused him beyond the licence of enraged tyrants. When Judas heard that they had passed the final and decreetory sentence of death upon his Lord, he, who thought it would not have gone so far, repented him to have been an instrument of so damnable a machination, and came and "brought the silver which they gave him for hire, threw it in amongst them, and said, I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood." But they, incurious of those hell-torments Judas felt within him, because their own fires burnt not yet, dismissed him, and upon consultation bought with the money a "field to bury strangers in." And "Judas went and hanged himself:" and the judgment was made more notorious and eminent by an unusual accident at such deaths, for he so swelled, that "he burst, and his bowels gushed out." But the Greek Scholiast and some others report out of Papias, St. John's scholar, that Judas fell from the fig tree on which he hanged, before he was quite dead, and survived his attempt some while, being so sad a spectacle of deformity, and pain, and a prodigious tumour, that his plague was deplorable, and

highly miserable, till at last he burst in the very substance of his trunk, as being extended beyond the possibilities and capacities of natures.

26. But the high priests had given Jesus over to the secular power, and carried him to Pilate, to be put to death by his sentence and military power; but coming thither they "would not enter into the judgment-hall" because of the feast, but Pilate met them, and, willing to decline the business, bid them "judge him according to their own law." They replied, "it was not lawful for them to put any man to death;" meaning, during the seven days of unleavened bread, (as appears in the instance of Herod, who detained Peter in prison, intending after Easter to bring him out to the people.) And their malice was restless till the sentence they had passed were put in execution. Others thinking that all the right of inflicting capital punishments was taken from the nation by the Romans; and Josephus writes, that when Ananias their high priest had by a council of the Jews condemned St. James, the brother of our Lord, and put him to death, without the consent of the Roman president, he was deprived of his priesthood. But because Pilate, who either by common right, or at that time, was the judge of capital inflictions, was averse from intermeddling in the condemnation of an innocent person, they attempted him with excellent craft; for knowing that Pilate was a great servant of the Roman greatness, and a hater of the sect of the Galileans, the high priest accused Jesus, that he was of that sect; that he "denied paying tribute to Cæsar, that he called himself king." Concerning which, when Pilate interrogated Jesus, he answered, that "his kingdom was not of this world;" and Pilate thinking he had nothing to do with the *other*, came forth again, and gave testimony, that "he found nothing worthy of death in Jesus." But hearing that he was a Galilean

and of "Herod's jurisdiction, Pilate sent him to Herod, who was at Jerusalem, at the feast. And Herod was glad, because he had heard much of him," and since his return from Rome "had desired to see him," but could not, by reason of his own avocations, and the ambulatory life of Christ; and now "he hoped to see a miracle done by him," of whom he heard so many. But the event of this was, that Jesus did there no miracle; Herod's soldiers set him at nought, and mocked him. And that day Herod was reconciled to Pilate. And Jesus was sent back arrayed in a white and splendid garment: which though possibly it might be intended for derision, yet was a symbol of innocence; condemned persons usually being arrayed in black. And when Pilate had again examined him, "Jesus, meek as a lamb, and as a sheep before the shearers, opened not his mouth; insomuch that Pilate wondered," perceiving the greatest innocence of the man by not offering to excuse or lessen any thing: for though "Pilate had power to release or crucify him," yet His contempt of death was in just proportion to his innocence; which also Pilate concealed not, but published Jesus's innocence by Herod's and his own sentence: to the great regret of the rulers, who, like ravening wolves, thirsted for a draught of blood, and to devour the morning prey.

27. But Pilate hoped to prevail upon the rulers by making it a favour from them to Jesus, and an indulgence from him to the nation, to set him free: for oftentimes even malice itself is driven out by the devil of self love, and so we may be acknowledged the authors of a safety, we are content to rescue a man even from our ourselves. Pilate therefore offered that, according to the custom of the nation, Jesus should be released for the honour of the present festival, and as a donative to the people. But the spirit of malice was here the more prevalent, and they desired

that "Barabbas, a murderer, a thief, and a seditious person," should be exchanged for him. Then Pilate, casting about all ways to acquit Jesus of punishment, and himself of guilt, offered to "scourge him, and let him go," hoping that a lesser draught of blood might stop the fury and rabidness of their passion, without their bursting with a *river* of his best and vital liquor. But these leeches would not so let go; "they cry out, Crucify him; and to engage him finally, they told him, if he did let this man go he was no friend to Cæsar."

28. But Pilate called for "water, and washed his hands," to demonstrate his own unwillingness, and to reject and transmit the guilt upon them, who took it on them as greedily as they sucked the blood; "they cried out, His blood be on us, and our children." As Pilate was going to give sentence, "his wife, being troubled in her dreams, sent" with the earnestness and passion of a woman, that he should "have nothing to do with that just person;" but he was engaged. Cæsar and Jesus, God and the king, did seem to have different interests; or at least he was threatened into that opinion; and Pilate, though he was satisfied it was but calumny and malice, yet he was loath to venture upon his answer at Rome, in case the high priest should have accused him. For no man knows, whether the interest or mistake of his judge may cast the sentence; and whoever is accused strongly is never thought entirely innocent. And, therefore, not only against the divine laws, but against the Roman too, he condemned an innocent person upon objections notoriously malicious; he adjudged to a death which was only due to public thieves and homicides, (crimes with which he was not charged,) upon a pretence of blasphemy, of which he stood accused, but not convicted, and for which by the Jewish law he should have been stoned, if found guilty. And this he did put into present execution, against

the Tiberian law, which about twelve years before decreed in favour of condemned persons, that after sentence execution should be deferred ten days.

22. And now was the holy Lamb to bleed. First, therefore, Pilate's soldiers "array him in a kingly robe, put a reed in his hand for a sceptre, plait a crown of thorns and put it on his head, they bow the knee, and mock him, they smite him" with his fantastic sceptre, and instead of tribute pay him with "blows and spittings upon his holy head:" and when they had exhausted the whole stock of poisonous contempt, "they divest him of the robes of mockery, and put him on his own;" they lead him to a pillar, and bind him fast, and scourge him with whips, a punishment that slaves only did use to suffer, (free persons being in certain cases beaten with rods and clubs) that they might add a new scorn to his afflictions, and make his sorrows like their own guilt, vast and mountainous. After which Barabbas being "set free, Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified."

30. The soldiers therefore having framed a *cross* sad and heavy, laid it upon Jesus' shoulders, (who, like Isaac, bore the wood with which he was to be sacrificed himself,) and they drive him out to crucifixion, who was scarce able to stand under that load. It is generally supposed that Jesus bore the whole tree, that is, both the parts of his cross; but to him that considers it, this will seem impossible: and therefore it is more likely, and agreeable to the old law of crucifying malefactors, that Jesus only carried the cross part; the body of it being upon the place, either already fixed, or prepared for its station. Even that lesser part was grievous and intolerable to his tender, virginal, and weakened body; and when he fainted, "they compel Simon a Cyrenian" to help him. "A great and a mixed multitude followed Jesus to Golgotha," the charnel-house



of the city, and the place of execution. But the women wept with bitter exclamations, and their sadness was increased by the sad predictions Jesus then made of their future misery, saying, "Ye daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children: for the time shall come that men shall say, Blessed are the barren that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck; for they shall call on the hills to cover them, and on the mountains to fall upon them." that by a sudden ruin they may escape the lingering calamities of famine and fear, and the horror of a thousand deaths.

31. "When Jesus was come to Golgotha," a place in the mount of Calvary, (where, according to the tradition of the ancients, Adam was buried, and where Abraham made an altar for the sacrifice of his Son) by the piety of his disciples, and (it is probable) of those good women who did use to minister to him, there was provided "wine mingled with myrrh," which among the Levantines is an excellent and pleasant mixture, and such as the piety and indulgence of the nations used to administer to condemned persons. But Jesus, who by voluntary susception did choose to suffer our pains, refused that refreshment which the piety of the women presented to him. The soldiers having stripped him, nailed him to the cross with four nails, and "divided his mantle into four parts, giving to each soldier a part;" but for his coat; because it would be spoiled if parted, "it being weaved without seam, they cast lots for it."

32. Now Pilate had caused a title containing the cause of his death to be superscribed on a table in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, the Hebrew being first, the Greek next, and the Latin nearest to the holy body; but all written after the Jewish manner, from the right hand to the left; for so the title is shewn in the church of Santa Croce, in Rome, the Latin letters being

to be read as if it were Hebrew: the reason of which I could never find sufficiently discovered, unless it were to make it more legible to the Jews, who by conversing with the Romans began to understand a little Latin. The title was, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews:" but the Pharisees would have it altered to "that he said he was King of the Jews." But Pilate out of wilfulness, or to do despite to the nation, or in honour to Jesus, whom he knew to be a just person, or being overruled by divine providence, refused to alter it. "And there were crucified with Jesus two thieves, Jesus being in the midst, according to the prophecy, he was reckoned with the transgressors." Then Jesus prayed for his persecutors; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." But while Jesus was full of pain and charity, and was praying and dying for his enemies, the rulers of the Jews mocked him, upbraiding him with the good works he did and the expresses of his power, "saying, he saved others, himself he cannot save; others saying, let him come down from the cross, if he be the king of the Jews, and we will believe in him:" and others, according as their malice was determined by fancy and occasion, added weight and scorn to his pains; and of the two malefactors that were crucified with him, "one reviled him, saying, if thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." And thus far the devil prevailed, undoing himself in riddle, provoking men to do despite to Christ, and to heighten his passion out of hatred to him; and yet doing and promoting that which was the ruin of all his own kingdom and potent mischiefs; like the Jew who in indignation against Mercury threw stones at his image, and yet was by his superior judged idolatrous, that being the manner of doing honour to the idol among the Gentiles. But then Christ who had upon the cross prayed for his enemies, and was heard of God in all that he desired, felt now the beginnings of success. For the other

thief, whom the present pains and circumstances of Jesus' passion had softened and made believing, reproved his fellow for not fearing God, confessed that this death happened "to them deservedly, but to Jesus causelessly:" and then prayed to Jesus, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Which combination of pious acts and miraculous conversation, Jesus entertained with a speedy promise of a very great felicity, promising that upon "that very day he should be with him in paradise."

33. "Now there were standing by the cross the mother of Jesus and her sister, and Mary Magdalen and John." And Jesus being upon his death-bed, although he had no temporal estate to bestow, yet he would make provision for his mother, who, being a widow, and now childless, was likely to be exposed to necessity and want; and therefore he called John, the beloved disciple, into Mary's kindred, making him to be her adopted son, and her to be his mother, by fiction of law: "woman, behold thy son; and man, behold thy mother. And from that time forward John took her home to his own house," which he had near mount Sion, after he had sold his inheritance in Galilee to the high priest.

34. While these things were doing, the whole frame of nature seemed to be dissolved and out of order, while its Lord and Creator suffered. For the sun was so darkened that the stars appeared; and the eclipse was prodigious in the manner as well as in degree, because the moon was not then in conjunction, but full: and it was noted by Phlegon, the freed man of the emperor Hadrian, by Lucian out of the acts of the Gauls, and Dionysius while he was yet a heathen, excellent scholars all, great historians and philosophers; who also noted the day of the week and hour or the day, agreeing with the circumstances of the cross. For the sun hid his head from beholding such a prodigy of

of sin and sadness, and provided a veil for the nakedness of Jesus, that the women might be present, and himself die, with modesty.

35. The eclipse and the passion began "at the sixth hour, and endured till the ninth," about which time Jesus, being tormented with the unsufferable load of his Father's wrath due for our sins, and wearied with pains and heaviness, cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and, as it is thought, repeated the whole two and twentieth Psalm, which is an admirable narrative of the passion, full of prayer and sadness, and description of his pains at first, and of eucharist, and joy, and prophecy at the last. But these first words, which it is certain and recorded that he spake, were in a language of itself, or else by reason of distance not understood, for they thought he had "called for Elias" to take him down from the cross. Then Jesus, being in the agonies of a high fever, said, "I thirst. And one ran, and filled a sponge with vinegar, wrapping it with hyssop, and put it on a reed, that he might drink." The vinegar and sponge were in executions of condemned persons set to stop the too violent issues of blood, and to prolong the death; but were exhibited to him in scorn: "mingled with gall," to make the mixture more horrid and ungentle. But "Jesus tasted it only, and refused the draught." And now knowing that the prophecies were fulfilled, his Father's wrath appeased, and his torments satisfactory, he said, "It is finished, and crying with a loud voice, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, he bowed his head, and yielded up his spirit" into the hands of God and died, hastening to his Father's glories. Thus did this glorious sun set in a sad and clouded west, running speedily to shine in the other world.

36. Then "was the veil of the temple," which separated the secret Mosaic rites from the eyes of the people, "rent in the midst from the top

to the bottom;" and the angels, presidents of the temple, called to each other to depart from their seats; and so great "an earthquake happened, that the rocks did rend, the mountains trembled, the graves opened, and the bodies of dead persons arose, walking from their cemeteries to the holy city, and appeared unto many:" and so great apprehensions and amaze-ments happened to them all that stood by, that they "departed, smiting their breasts with sorrow and fear:" and the centurion that ministered at the execution said, "certainly this was the Son of God;" and he became a disciple, renouncing his military employment, and died a martyr.

37. But because the next day was the Jews' Sabbath, and a paschal festival besides, the Jews hastened that the bodies should be taken from the cross, and therefore sent to Pilate to hasten their death by "breaking their legs, that before sunset they might be taken away, according to the commandment, and be buried." The soldiers therefore came, "and brake the legs of the two thieves; but espying and wondering that Jesus was already dead, they brake not his legs; for the Scripture foretold, that a bone of him should not be broken: but a soldier with his lance pierced his side, and immediately there streamed out two rivulets of water and blood." But the holy Virgin-mother, (whose soul during this whole passion "was pierced with a sword" and sharper sorrows, though she was supported by the comforts of faith, and those holy predictions of his resurrection and future glories, which Mary had laid up in store against this great day of expense) now that she saw her holy Son had suffered all that our necessities and their malice could require or inflict, caused certain ministers, with whom she joined, to take her dead Son from the cross; whose body when she once got free from the nails she kissed, and embraced with entertainments of the nearest vicinity that could be ex-

pressed by a person that was holy and sad, and a mother weeping for her dead Son.

38. But she was highly satisfied with her own meditations, that now that great mystery determined by divine predestination before the beginning of all ages was fulfilled in her Son; and the passion, that must needs be, was accomplished: she therefore first bathes his cold body with her warm tears, and makes clean the surface of the wounds, and delivering a winding napkin to Joseph of Arimathea, gave to him in charge to enwrap the body and embalm it, to compose it for the grave, and do it all the rites of funeral, having first exhorted him to a public confession of what he was, privately, till now: and he obeyed the counsel of so excellent a person, and ventured upon the displeasure of the Jewish rulers, and "went confidently to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus." And "Pilate gave him the power of it."

39. "Joseph therefore takes the body, binds the face with a napkin," washes the body, anoints it with ointment, enwraps it in a composition of "myrrh and aloes, and puts it into a new tomb which he for himself had hewn out of a rock," it not being lawful among the Jews to inter a condemned person in the common cemeteries: for all these circumstances were in "the Jews manner of burying." But when the sun was set "the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate, telling him that Jesus, whilst he was living, foretold his own resurrection upon the third day; and lest his disciples should come and steal the body, and say he was risen from the dead, desired that the sepulchre might be secured against the danger of any such imposture." Pilate gave them leave to do their pleasure, even to the satisfaction of their smallest scruples. They therefore "sealed the grave, rolled a great stone at the mouth of it," and, as an ancient tradition says, bound it about with labels of iron, and set a watch of soldiers, as if they had intended to have made it surer than

the decrees of fate, or the never failing laws of nature.

Considerations of some Preparatory Accidents before the Entrance of Jesus into his Passion.

1. He that observeth the story of the life of Jesus, cannot but see it all the way to be strewed with thorns and sharp pointed stones; and although, by the kisses of his feet, they became precious and salutary, yet they procured to him sorrow and disease: it was "meat and drink to him to do his Father's will, but it was bread of affliction, and rivers of tears to drink;" and for these he thirsted like the earth after the cool stream. For so great was his perfection, so exact the conformity of his will, so absolute the subordination of his inferior faculties to the infinite love of God, which sat regent in the court of his will and understanding, that, in this election of accidents, he never considered the *taste*, but the goodness, never distinguished sweet from bitter, but duty and piety always prepared his table. And therefore now knowing that his time determined by the Father was nigh, he hastened up to Jerusalem; he went before his disciples, saith St. Mark, and they followed him trembling and amazed; and yet before that, even then when his brethren observed he had a design of publishing himself, he suffered them "to go before him, and went up as it were in secret." For so we are invited to martyrdom, and suffering in a Christian cause by so great an example: the holy Jesus is gone before us, and it were a holy contention to strive whose zeal were forwardest in the designs of humiliation and self-denial; but it were also well, if in doing ourselves secular advantage, and promoting our worldly interest, we should follow him, who was ever more distant from receiving honours, than a painful death. Those affections which dwell in sadness, and are married to grief,

and lie at the foot of the cross, and trace the sad steps of Jesus, have the wisdom of recollection, the tempers of sobriety, and are the best imitations of Jesus, and securities against the levity of a dispersed and a vain spirit. This was intimated by many of the disciples of Jesus in the days of the Spirit, and when they had "tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;" for then we find many ambitious of martyrdom, and that laid stratagems and designs by unusual deaths to get a crown. The soul of St. Laurence was so scorched with ardent desires of dying for his Lord, that he accounted the coals of his gridiron but as a zephyr or the aspersion of cold water to refresh his soul; they were chill as the Alpine snows, in respect of the heats of his diviner flames. And if these lesser stars shine so brightly and burn so warily, what heat of love may we suppose to have been in the Sun of Righteousness? If they went fast toward the crown of martyrdom, we know that the holy Jesus went before them all: no wonder, "he came forth as a bridegroom from his chamber, and rejoiced as a giant to run his course."

2. When the disciples had overtaken Jesus, he begins to them a sad homily upon the old text of suffering, which he had well nigh for a year together preached upon: but because it was an displeasing lesson, so contradictory to those interests upon the hopes of which they had entertained themselves, and spent all their desires, they could by no means understand it: for an understanding prepossessed with a fancy, or an unhandsome principle, construes all other notions to the sense of the first; and whatsoever contradicts it, we think it an objection, and feel bound to answer it. But now that it concerned Christ to speak so plainly, that his disciples, by what was to happen within five or six days, might not be scandalized, or believe it happened to Jesus without his knowledge and voluntary entertainment, he tells them of his

sufferings to be accomplished in this journey to Jerusalem. And here the disciples shewed themselves to be but men, full of passion and indiscreet affection; and the bold Galilean, St. Peter, took the boldness to dehort his master from so great an infelicity; and met with a reprehension so great, that neither the scribes, nor the Pharisees, nor Herod himself ever met with its parallel. Jesus called him Satan; meaning, that no greater contradiction can be offered to the designs of God and his holy Son, than to dissuade us from suffering. And if we understood how great are the advantages of a suffering condition, we should think all our daggers gilt, and our pavements strewed with roses, and our halters silken, and the rack an instrument of pleasure, and be most impatient of those temptations which seduce us into ease, and divorce us from the cross, as being opposite to our greatest hopes and most perfect desires. But still this humour of St. Peter's imperfection abides amongst us. He that breaks off the yoke of obedience, and unties the bands of discipline, and preaches a cheap religion, and presents heaven in the midst of flowers, and strews carpets softer than the Asian luxury in the way, and sets the songs of Sion to the tunes of Persian and lighter airs, and offers great liberty of living, and bondage under affections and sins, and reconciles eternity with the present enjoyment, he shall have his schools filled with disciples; but he that preaches the cross, and the severities of Christianity, and the strictnesses of a holy life, shall have the lot of his blessed Lord; he shall be thought ill of, and deserted.

3. Our blessed Lord, five days before his passion, sent his disciples to a village to borrow an ass, that he might ride in triumph to Jerusalem; he had none of his own, but yet he who was so dear to God could not want what was to supply his needs. It may be God hath laid up our portion in the repositories of other men, and

means to furnish us from their tables, to feed us from their granaries, and that their wardrobe shall clothe us; for it is all one to him to make a fish bring us money, or a crow to bring us meat, or the stable of our neighbour to furnish our needs of beasts: if he brings it to thy need as thou wantest it, thou hast all the good in the use of the creature which the owners can receive; and the horse which is lent me in charity does me as much ease, and the bread which is given me in alms feeds me as well, as the other part of it, which the good man that gave me a portion reserved for his own eating, could do to him. And if we would give God leave to make provisions for us in the ways of his own choosing, and not estimate our wants by our manner of receiving, being contented that God by any of his own ways should minister it to us, we should find our cares eased, and our content increased, and our thankfulness engaged, and all our moderate desires contented by the satisfaction of our needs. For if God is pleased to feed me by my neighbour's charity, there is no other difference but that God makes me an occasion of his spiritual good, as he is made the occasion of my temporal; and if we think it any disparagement, we may remember that God conveys more good to him by me, than to me by him: and it is a proud impatience to refuse or to be angry with God's provisions, because he hath not observed my circumstances and ceremonies of election.

4. And now begins that great triumph in which the holy Jesus was pleased to exalt his office and to abase his person. He rode like a poor man upon an ass, a beast of burthen and the lowest value, and yet it was not his own; and in that equipage he received the acclamations due to a mighty prince, to the son of the eternal king: telling us, that the smallness of fortune, and the rudeness of exterior habiliments and a rough wall, are sometimes the outsides of a great glory; and that when God means to

glorify or do honour to a person he needs no help from secular advantages. He hides great riches in renunciation of the world, and makes great honour break forth from the clouds of humility, and victory to arise from yielding and the modesty of departing from our interest, and peace to be the reward of him that suffers all the hostilities of men and devils. For Jesus, in this great humility of his, gives a great probation, that he was the Messiah, and the king of Sion, because no other king entered into those gates riding upon an ass, or received the honour of hosannah, in that unlikelihood and contradiction of unequal circumstances.

5. The blessed Jesus had never but *two* days of triumph in his life ; the one was on his transfiguration upon mount Tabor, the other, this his riding into the holy city. But that it may appear how little were his joys and present exterior complacencies, in the day of his transfiguration Moses and Elias appeared to him, telling him what great things he was to suffer ; and in this day of his riding to Jerusalem he wet the palms with a dew sweeter than the moistures upon mount Hermon or the drops of manna : for, to allay the little warmth of a springing joy, he let down a shower of tears, weeping over undone Jerusalem in the day of his triumph, leaving it disputable whether he felt more joy or sorrow in the acts of love ; for he triumphed, to consider that the redemption of the world was so near ; and wept bitterly, that men would not be redeemed ; his joy was great to consider that himself was to suffer so great sadness for our good, and his sorrow was very great to consider that we would not entertain that good that he brought and laid before us by his passion. He was in figure, as his servant St. Paphnutius was afterwards in letter and true story, “crucified upon palms :” which indeed was the emblem of a victory ; but yet such as had leaves sharp, poignant, and vexatious. However, he entered into Jerusalem

dressed in gaieties, which yet he placed under his feet ; but with such pomps and solemnities each family, according to its proportion, was accustomed to bring the paschal lamb¹ to be slain for the passover : and it was not an indecent ceremony, that “the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world” should be brought to his slaughter with the acknowledgments of a religious solemnity ; because now, that real good was to be exhibited to the world, which those little paschal lambs did but signify and represent in shadow : and that was the true cause of all the little joy he had.

6. And if we consider what followed, it might seem also to be a design to heighten the dolorousness of his passion : for to descend from the greatest of worldly honours, from the adoration of a God, and the acclamations to a king, to the death of a slave, and the torments of a cross, and the dishonours of a condemned criminal, were so great stoopings and vast changes, that they gave height, and sense, and excellency to each other. This then seemed an excellent glory, but indeed was but an art and instrument of grief : for such is the nature of all our felicities ; they end in sadness, and increase the sting of sorrows, and add moment to them, and cause impatience and uncomfortable remembrances ; but the griefs of a Christian, whether they be instances of repentance, or parts of persecution, or exercises of patience, end in joy and endless comfort. Thus, Jesus, like a rainbow, half made of the glories of light, and half of the moisture of a cloud, half triumph, and half sorrow, entered into that town where he had done much good to others, and to himself received nothing but affronts ; yet his tenderness increased upon him, and on that very journey, which was Christ's last solemn visit for their recovery, he *doubled* all the instruments of his mercy and their conversion : he rode in triumph, the children sang Hosannah to him, he cured many diseased persons, he wept for them, and

pitied them, and sighed out the intimations of a prayer, and did penance for their ingratitude, and stayed all day there, looking about him towards evening, and no man would invite him home, but he was forced to go to Bethany, where he was sure of an hospitable entertainment. I think no Christian that reads this but will be full of indignation at the whole city, who for malice or for fear would not or durst not receive their Saviour into their houses; and yet *we* do worse: for now that he is become our Lord with mightier demonstrations of his eternal power, we suffer him to look round about upon us for months and years together, and possibly never entertain him, till our house is ready to rush upon our heads, and we are going to unusual and stranger habitations. And yet in the midst of a populous and mutinous city this great king had some good subjects, persons that threw away their own garments, and laid them at the feet of our Lord: that being divested of their own, they might be reinvested with a robe of his righteousness, wearing that till it were changed into a stole of glory: the very ceremony of their reception of the Lord became symbolical to them, and expressive of all our duties.

7. But I consider the blessed Jesus had affections not less than infinite towards all mankind; and he who wept upon Jerusalem, who had done so great despite to him, and within five days were to fill up the measure of their iniquities, and do an act which all ages of the world could never repeat in the same instance, did also in the number of his tears reckon our sins as sad considerations and incentives of his sorrow. And it would well become us to consider what great evil we do, when our actions are such as for which our blessed Lord did weep. He who was seated in the bosom of felicity, yet he moistened his fresh laurels upon the day of his triumph with tears of love and bitter alloy. His day of triumph was a day of sorrow: and if we would weep for our sins, that instance

of sorrow would be a day of triumph and jubilee.

8. From hence the holy Jesus went to Bethany, where he had another manner of reception than at the holy city. There he supped; for his goodly day of triumph had been with him a fasting day. And Mary, who had spent one box of nard pistie upon our Lord's feet as a sacrifice of eucharist for her conversion, now bestowed another in thankfulness for the restitution of her brother Lazarus to life, and consigned her Lord unto his burial. And here she met with an evil interpreter: Judas, an apostle, one of the Lord's own family, pretended it had been a better piety to have given it to the poor: but it was malice, and the spirit either of envy or avarice, in him that passed that sentence: for he that sees a pious action well done, and seeks to undervalue it by telling how it might have been better, reproves nothing but his own spirit. For a man may do very well, and God would accept it; though to say he might have done better, is to say only that action was not the most perfect and absolute in its kind: but to be angry at a religious person, and without any other pretence but that he might have done better, is spiritual envy: for a pious person would have nourished up that infant action by love and praise, till it had grown to the most perfect and intelligent piety. But the event of that man gave the interpretation of his present purpose: and at the best it could be no other than a rash judgment of the action and intention of a religious, thankful, and holy person. But she found her Lord, who was her beneficiary in this, become her patron and her advocate. And hereafter, when we find the devil, the great accuser of God's saints, object against the piety and religion of holy persons; a cup of cold water shall be accepted unto reward, and a good intention heightened to the value of an exterior expression, and a piece of gum to the equality of a holocaust, and an action done with great

zeal and an intense love be acquitted from all its adherent imperfections; Christ receiving them into himself, and being alike the altar of incense, hallowing the very smoke, and raising it into a flame, and entertaining it into the embraces of the firmament and the bosom of heaven. Christ himself, who is the judge of our actions, is also the entertainer and object of our charity and duty, and the advocate of our persons.

9. Judas, who declaimed against the woman, made tacit reflections upon his Lord for suffering it: and indeed every obloquy against any of Christ's servants is looked on as arrow shot into the heart of Christ himself. And now a persecution being begun against the Lord within his own family, another was raised against him from without. For the chief priests "took counsel against Jesus" and called a consistory to contrive "how they might destroy him:" and here was the greatest representment of the goodness of God and the ingratitude of man that could be practised or understood. How often had Jesus poured forth tears for them! how many sleepless nights had he awaked to do them advantage! how many days had he spent in humiliations and admirable visitations of mercy and charity, in casting out devils, in curing their sick, in correcting their delinquencies, in reducing them to the ways of security and peace; and, that we may use the greatest expression in the world, that is, his own, "in gathering them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings," to give them strength, and warmth, and life, and ghostly nourishment? And the chief priests together with their faction use all arts and watch all opportunities to get Christ, not that they might possess him, but to destroy him little considering that they extinguish their own eyes, and destroy that spring of life which was intended to them for a blissful immortality.

10. And here it was that the devil showed his promptness to furnish every evil intended person with apt instruments to act the very

worst of his intentions: the devil knew their purposes, and the aptness and proclivity of Judas; and by bringing these together he served their present design; and his own great intention. The devil never fails to promote every evil purpose; and, except where God's restraining grace does intervene and interrupt the opportunity, by interposition of different and cross accidents to serve other ends of providence, no man easily is foud of wickedness, but he shall receive enough to ruin him. Indeed Nero and Julian, both witty men and powerful, desired to have been magicians, and could not: and although possibly the devil would have corresponded with them, who yet were already his own in all degrees of security, yet God permitted not that, lest they might have understood new ways of doing despite to martyrs and afflicted Christians. And it concerns us not to tempt God, or invite a forward enemy: for as we are sure the devil is ready to promote all vicious desires, and bring them out to execution, so we are not sure that God will not permit him: and he that desires to be undone, and cares not to be prevented by God's restraining grace, shall find his ruin in the folly of his own desires, and become wretched by his own election. Judas, hearing of this congregation of the priests, went and offered to betray his Lord, and made a covenant, the price of which was "thirty pieces of silver," and he returned.

11. It is not intimated in the history of the life of Jesus, that Judas had any malice against the person of Christ; for when afterwards he saw the matter was to end in the death of his Lord, he repented: but a base and unworthy spirit of covetousness possessed him: and the relics of indignation for missing the price of the ointment which the holy Magdalen had poured upon Christ's feet, burnt in his bowels with a secret dark melancholic fire, and made an eruption into an act which all ages of the world could never parallel. They appointed him for hire

thirty pices, and some say that every pice did in value equal ten ordinary current deniers; and so Judas was satisfied by receiving the worth of the three hundred pence at which he valued the nard pistic. But hereafter let no Christian be ashamed to be despised and undervalued; for he will hardly meet so great a reproach, as to have so disproportioned a price set upon his life as was upon the Holy Jesus. Mary Magdalen thought it not good enough to aneal his sacred feet, Judas thought it a sufficient price for his head: for covetousness aims at base and low purchases, whilst holy love is great and comprehensive as the bosom of heaven, and aims at nothing that is less than infinite. The love of God is a holy fountain, limpid and pure, sweet and salutary, lasting and eternal: the love of money is a vertiginous pool, sucking all into it to destroy it; it is troubled and uneven, giddy and unsafe, serving no end but its own, and that also in a restless and uneasy motion. The love of God spends itself upon him, to receive again the reflections of grace and benediction: the love of money spends all its desires upon itself, to purchase nothing but unsatisfying instruments of exchange, or supernumerary provisions, and ends in dissatisfaction, and emptiness of spirit, and a bitter curse. Mary Magdalen was defended by her Lord against calumny, and rewarded with an honourable mention to all ages of the church; besides the "unction from above," which she shortly after received to consign her to crowns and sceptres: but Judas was described in the Scripture, the book of life with the black character of death, he was disgraced to eternal ages, and presently after acted his own tragedy with a sad and ignoble death.

12. Now, all things being fitted, our blessed Lord sends two disciples to prepare the pass-over, that he might fulfil the law of Moses, and pass from thence to institutions evangelical, and then fulfil his sufferings. Christ gave them a sign to guide them to the house, "a man

bearing a pitcher of water;" by which some (that delight in mystical significations) say was typified the sacrament of baptism: meaning that although by occasion of the paschal solemnity the holy eucharist was first instituted, yet it was afterwards to be applied to practice according to the sense of this accident; only baptized persons were susceptibles of the other more perfective rite, as the taking nutriment supposes persons born into the world, and within the common conditions of human nature. But in the letter, it was an instance of the divine omniscience, which could pronounce concerning accidents at a distance as if they were present: and yet also, like the provision of the colt to ride on, it was an instance of providence, and security of all God's sons for their portion of temporals. Jesus had not a lamb of his own, and possibly no money in the bags to buy one, and yet providence was his guide, and the charity of a good man was his provéditeur, and he found excellent conveniences in the entertainments of a hospitable good man, as if he had dwelt in Ahab's ivory house, and had had the riches of Solomon, and the meat of his household.

THE PRAYER.

1. O holy king of Sion, eternal Jesus, who with great humility and infinite love didst enter into the holy city, riding upon an ass, that thou mightest verify the predictions of the prophets, and give example of meekness and of the gentle and paternal government which the eternal Father laid upon thy shoulders; be pleased, dearest Lord, to enter into my soul with triumph, trampling over all thine enemies: and give me grace to entertain thee with joy and adoration, with abjection of my own desires, with lopping

off all my superfluous branches of a temporal condition, and spending them in the offices of charity and religion, and divesting myself of all my desires, laying them at thy holy feet, that I may bear the yoke and burthen of the Lord with alacrity, with love, and the wonders of a satisfied and triumphant spirit. Lord, enter in and take possession; and thou, to whose honour the very stones would give testimony, make my heart an instrument of thy praises; let me strew thy way with flowers of virtue, and the holy rosary of Christian graces. And by thy aid and example let us also triumph over all our infirmities and hostilities, and then lay our victories at thy feet, and at last follow thee into thy heavenly Jerusalem with palms in our hands, and joy in our hearts, and eternal acclamations on our lips, rejoicing in thee, and singing hallelujahs in a happy eternity to thee, O holy king of Sion, eternal Jesus. Amen.

2. O blessed and dear Lord, who wert pleased to permit thyself to be sold to the assemblies of evil persons for a vile price by one of thy own servants, for whom thou hadst done so great favours, and hadst designed a crown and a throne to him, and he turned himself into a sooty coal, and entered into the portion of evil angels; teach us to value thee above all the joys of men, to prize thee at an estimate beyond all the wealth of nature, to buy wisdom, and not to sell it, to part with all that we may enjoy thee: and let no temptation abuse our understandings, no loss vex us into impatience, no frustration of hope fill us with indignation, no pressure of calamitous accidents make us angry at thee the fountain of love and blessing, no covetousness transport us into the suburbs of hell and the regions of sin; but make us to love thee as well as ever any creature loved thee, that we may never burn in any fires but of a holy love, nor sink in any inundation but what proceeds from penitential showers, and suffer no violence but of importunate desires to live with

thee, and, when thou callest us, to suffer with thee, and for thee.

3. Lord, let me never be betrayed by myself, or any violent accident and importunate temptation; let me never be sold for the vile price of temporal gain, or transient pleasure, or a pleasant dream; but since thou hast bought me with a price, even then when thou wert sold thyself, let me never be separated from thy possession. I am thine, bought with a price, Lord, save me; and in the day when thou bindest up thy jewels remember, Lord, that I cost thee as dear as any, and therefore cast me not into the portion of Judas: but let me walk, and dwell, and bathe in the field of thy blood, and pass from hence pure and sanctified into the society of the elect apostles, receiving my part with them, and my lot in the communications of thy inheritance. O gracious Lord and dearest Saviour Jesus. Amen.

Considerations upon the Washing of the Disciples' Feet by Jesus, and his Sermon of Humility.

1. The holy Jesus went now to eat his last paschal supper, and to finish the work of his legation, and fulfil that part of the law of Moses in every one of its smallest and most minute particularities, in which also the actions were significant of spiritual duties: which we may transfer from the letter to the spirit in our own instances, that as Jesus ate the paschal lamb with a staff in his hand, with his loins girt, with sandals on his feet, in great haste, with unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs; so we also should do all our services according to the signification of these symbols, leaning upon the cross of Jesus for a staff, and bearing the rod of his government, with loins girt with an-

gelical chastity, with shoes on our feet, that so we may guard and have custody over our affections, and “be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, eating in haste, as becomes persons “hungering and thirsting after righteousness, doing the work of the Lord zealously and fervently, without the leaven of malice and secular interest, with bitter herbs of self-denial and mortification of our sensual and inordinate desires. The sense and mystery of the whole act with all its circumstances is,—that we obey all the sanctions of the divine law, and that every part of our religion be pure and peaceable, chaste and obedient, confident in God and diffident in ourselves, frequent and zealous, humble and resigned, just and charitable; and there will not easily be wanting any just circumstance to hallow and consecrate the action.

2. When the holy Jesus had finished his last Mosaic rite, he descends to give the example of the first fruit of evangelical graces: “he rises from supper, lays aside his garment” like a servant, and with all the circumstances of an humble ministry “washes the feet of his disciples,” beginning at the first, St. Peter, until he came to Judas the traitor: that we might in one scheme see a rare conjunction of charity and humility, of self-denial and indifference, represented by a person glorious and great, their Lord and Master, sad and troubled. And he chose to wash their feet rather than their head, that he might have the opportunity of a more humble posture, and a more apt signification of his charity. Thus God lays every thing aside that he may serve his servants; heaven stoops to earth, and one abyss calls upon another, and the miseries of man, which were next to infinite, are excelled by a mercy equal to the immensity of God. And this washing of their feet, which was an accustomed civility and entertainment of honoured strangers at the beginning of their meal, Christ deferred to the end of the paschal supper, that it might be preparatory to the

second, which he intended should be festival to all the world. St. Peter was troubled that the hands of his Lord should wash his servants feet, those hands which had opened the eyes of the blind, and cured lepers, and healed all diseases, and when lift up to heaven were omnipotent, and could restore life to dead and buried persons: he counted it a great indecency for him to suffer it: but it was no more than was necessary, for they had but lately been earnest in dispute for precedency; and that was of itself so apt to swell into tumour and inconvenience, that it was not to be cured but by some prodigy of example and miracle of humility, which the holy Jesus offered to them in this action, calling them to learn some great lesson: a lesson which God descended from heaven to earth, from riches to poverty, from essential innocence to the disreputation of a sinner, from a master to a servant, to teach us: that is, that we should esteem ourselves but just as we are, low, sinful, miserable, needy, and unworthy. It seems it is so great a thing that man should come to have just and equal thoughts of himself, that God used powerful arts to transmit this lesson, and engrave it in the spirits of men; and if the receipt fails, we are eternally lost in the mists of vanity, and enter into the condition of those angels whom pride transformed and spoiled into the condition of devils: and upon consideration of this great example Guericus a good man cried out, “Thou hast overcome, O Lord, thou hast overcome my pride: this example hath mastered me; I deliver myself up into thy hands, never to receive liberty or exaltation but in the condition of thy humblest servant.”

3. And to this purpose St. Bernard hath an affectionate and devout consideration, saying, “That some of the angels as soon as they were created had an ambition to become like God, and to aspire unto the throne which God had appointed to the holy Jesus in eternal ages.

When God created man, presently the devil rubbed his leprosy upon him, and he would needs be like God too, and Satan promised him that he should. As the evil angels would have been like to God in power and majesty, so man would have been like him in knowledge, and have imitated the wisdom of the eternal Father. But man had the fate of Gehazi; he would needs have the talent and garments of Lucifer, and he had also his plague; he lost paradise for his pride. And now what might befit the Son of God to do, seeing man so lost, and God so zealous of his honour? 'I see, (saith he) that by occasion of me the Father loses his creatures, for they have all aspired to be like me, and are fallen into the greatest infelicities. Behold, I will go towards man in such a form, that whosoever from henceforth would become like me, shall be so, and be a gainer by it.' And for this cause the Son of God came from heaven, and made himself a poor humble person, and by all the actions of his life commented upon the present discourse: 'Learn of me, for I am weak and humble of heart.'" Blessed be that mercy and bounty which moved Almighty God to condescend to that so great appetite we had of being like him; for now we may be like unto God, but it must be by humility, of which he hath given us an example powerful as miracles, and great as our own pride and misery.

4. And indeed our blessed Lord, knowing that examples are like maps and perfect schemes in which the whole continent may at once be represented to the eye for all the purposes of art and benefit, did in the latter end of his life draw up the dispersions and larger harvest of his precepts, binding them in the bundle of great examples, and casting them into actions as into sums total: for so this act of washing the feet of his own ministers, and then dying for them, and for all his enemies, did preach the three great sums of evangelical perfection, with an admirable energy and abbreviature; humility

and charity, and sufferings, being to Christianity as the body, and the soul, and the spirit are to the whole man. For no man brings a sad funeral into the theatre to make his spectators merry, nor can well preach chastity in the impurity of the Bordelli, or persuade temperance when himself is full of wine and luxury, and enters into the baths to boil his undigested meat that he may return to his second supper, and breathes forth impure belchings together with his homily; a poor eremite, or a severe-living philosopher, into whose life his own precepts have descended, and his doctrine is mingled with his soul, mingles also effect and virtue with homilies, and incorporates his doctrine in the hearts of his disciples. And this the holy Jesus did in his own person, bearing the burthen first upon his own shoulders, that we may with better alacrity, undergo what our blessed Lord bears with us and for us. But that we may the better understand what our blessed Lord designed to us in this lecture, let us consider the proper acts of humility which integrate the virtue.

5. The first is, "Christ's humble man thinks meanly of himself:" and there is great reason every man should. For his body is but rottenness and infirmity, covered with a fair mantle, a dunghill overcast with snow: and if we consider seriously, that from trees and plants come oil, balsam, wine, spices, and aromatic odours, and that from the sinks of our body no such sweet or salutary emanations are observed, we may at least think it unreasonable to boast our beauty which is nothing but a clear and well coloured skin, which every thing in the world can spoil; nor our strength, which an ague tames into the infirmities of a child, and in which we are excelled by a bull; nor any thing of our body which is nothing but an unruly servant of the soul, marked with characters of want and dependence, and begging help from all the elements, and upon a little disturbance growing

troublesome to itself by its own impurities. And yet there is no reason, in respect of the soul, for any man to exalt himself above his brother; because all reasonable souls are equal; and, that one is wise, and another is foolish or less learned, is by accident or extrinsic causes: God at first makes all alike; but an indisposed body, or an inopportune education, or evil customs superinduce variety and difference. And if God discerns a man from his brother by distinction of gifts, it alters not the case; still the man hath nothing of himself that can call him excellent: it is as if a wall upon which the sun reflects should boast itself against another that stands in the shadow. Greater glory is to be paid to God for the discerning gifts; but to take any of it to ourselves, and rise higher than our brother, or advance our own opinion, is, as if a man should be proud of being in *debt*, and think it the greater excellency that he is charged with heavier and more severe accounts.

6. This act consists not in declamations and forms of satire against ourselves, saying, I am a miserable sinful creature, I am proud, or covetous, or ignorant. For many men say so, that are not willing to be thought so. Neither is humility a virtue made up of wearing old clothes, or doing servile and mean employments by voluntary undertaking, or of sullen gestures, or mean behaviour, and artifice of lowly expressions: for these may become snares to invite and catch at honour, and then they are collateral designs of pride, and direct actions of hypocrisy. But it consists in a true understanding of our own condition, and a separating our own nothing from the good we have received, and giving to God all the glory, and taking to ourselves all the shame and dishonour due to our sinful condition. He that thinks himself truly miserable and vilified by sin, hates it perfectly; and he that knows himself to be nothing, cannot be exalted in himself:

and whatsoever is besides these two extremes of a natural nothing, and a superadded sin, must be those good things we have received, which, because they derive from God, must make all their returns thither. But this act is of greater difficulty in persons pious, full of gifts and eminent in graces, who being fellow-workers together with God, sometimes grow tacitly and without notice given to confide in themselves, and with some freer fancy ascribe too much of the good action to their own choice and diligence, and take up their crowns, which lie at the foot of the throne, and set them upon their own heads. For a sinner to desire to be esteemed a sinner, is no more humility than it is for the son of a ploughman to confess his father; but indeed it is hard for a man to be cried up for a saint, to walk upon the spire of glory, and to have no adherence or impure mixtures upon vanity grow upon the outside of his heart. All men have not such heads as to walk in great heights without giddiness and unsettled eyes. Lucifer and many angels walking upon the battlements of heaven grew top-heavy and fell into the state of devils: and the father of the christian eremites, St. Antony, was frequently attempted by the devil, and solicited to vanity; the devil usually making fantastic noises to be heard before him, "make room for the saint and servant of God." But the good man knew Christ's voice to be a low base of humility, and that it was the noise of hell that invited to complacencies and vanity; and therefore took the example of the apostles, who in the midst of the greatest reputation and spiritual advancements were dead unto the world, and seemed to live in the state of separation. For the true stating our own question and knowing ourselves, must needs represent us, as set in the midst of infinite imperfections, laden with sins, choked with the noises of a polluted conscience, persons fond of trifles, neglecting objects fit for wise

men, full of ingratitude, and all such things which in every man else we look upon as scars and deformities, and which we use to single out, and take one alone as sufficient to disgrace and disrepute all the excellences of our neighbour : but if we would esteem them with the same severity in ourselves, and remember with how many such objections our little felicities are covered, it would make us charitable in our censures, compassionate and gentle to others, apt to excuse, and as ready to support their weaknesses, and in all accidents and chances to ourselves to be content and thankful, as knowing the worst of poverty and inconvenience to be a mercy and a splendid fortune in respect of our demerits. I have read, that "when the duke of Candia had voluntarily entered into the incommodities of a religious poverty and retirement, he was one day spied and pitied by a lord of Italy, who out of tenderness wished him to be more careful and nutritive of his person. The good duke answered, Sir, be not troubled, and think not that I am ill provided with conveniences, for I send a harbinger before, who makes my lodgings ready, and takes care that I be royally entertained. The Lord asked him who was his harbinger. He answered, the knowledge of myself, and the consideration of what I deserve for my sins, which is eternal torments ; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my lodging, how unprovided soever I find it, methinks it is ever better than I deserve." The sum of this meditation consists in believing, and considering, and reducing to practice those thoughts, that we are nothing of ourselves, that we have nothing of our own, that we have received more than ever we can discharge, that we have added innumerable sins, that we can call nothing our own but such things which we are ashamed to own, and such things which are apt to ruin us. If we do nothing contrary to the purpose and hearty persuasion of such thoughts, then we think

meanly of ourselves. And in order to it we may make use of this advice, to let no day pass without some sad recollection and memory of somewhat which may put us to confusion and mean opinion of ourselves ; either call to mind the worst of our sins, or the undiscereetest of our actions, or the greatest of our shame, or the uncivillest of our affronts, any thing to make us descend lower, and kiss the foot of the mountain. And this consideration applied also to every tumour of spirit, as soon as it rises, may possibly allay it.

7. Secondly, "Christ's humble man bears contumelies evenly and sweetly, and desires not to be honoured by others." He chooses to do those things that deserve honour and a fair name, but then eats not of those fruits himself, but transmits them to the use of others, and the glories of God. This is a certain consequence of the other : for he that truly disesteems himself is content that others should do so too ; and he who with some regret and impatience hears himself scorned or undervalued, hath not acquired the grace of humility. Which Serapion in Cassian noted to a young person, who perpetually accused himself with the greatest semblances of humility, but was impatient when Serapion reproved him. "Did you hope that I would have praised your humility, and have reputed you for a saint ? It is a strange perverseness to desire others to esteem highly of you for that, in which to yourself you seem most unworthy." He that inquires into the faults of his own actions, requiring them that saw them to tell him in what he did amiss, not to learn the fault, but to engage them to praise it, cozens himself into pride, and makes humility the instrument. And a man would be ashamed if he were told that he used stratagems for praise : but so glorious a thing is humility, that pride, to hide her own shame, puts on the other's vizor ; it being more to a proud man's purposes to seem humble than to be so. And

such was the Cynic, whom Lucian derided, because that one searching his scrip in expectation to have found in it mouldy bread or old rags, discovered a bale of dice, a box of perfumes, and the picture of his fair mistress. Carisianus walked in his gown in the feast of Saturn, and when all Rome was let loose in wantonness, he put on the long robe of a senator, and severe person; and yet nothing was more lascivious than he. But the devil pride prevails sometimes upon the spirit of lust. Humility neither directly nor by consequence seeks for praise, and suffers it not to rest upon its own pavement, but reflects it all upon God, and receives all lessening and instruments of affront and disgrace, that mingle not with sin or indecencies, more willingly than panegyrics. When others have their desires, thou not thine; the sayings of another are esteemed, thine slighted; others ask and obtain, thou beggest and art refused; they are cried up, thou disgraced and hissed at; and while they are employed, thou art laid by, as fit for nothing; or an unworthy person commands thee and rules thee like a tyrant, he reproves thee, suspects thee, reviles thee; canst thou bear this sweetly, and entertain the usage as thy just portion, and as an accident most fit and proper to thy person and condition? Dost thou not raise theatres to thyself, and take delight in the suppletories of thy own good opinion, and the flatteries of such whom thou endearest to thee, that their praising thee should heal the wounds of thine honour by an imaginary and fantastic restitution? He that is not content and patient in affronts, hath not yet learned humility of the Holy Jesus.

8. Thirdly, As "Christ's humble man is content in affronts, and not greedy of praise; so when it is presented to him, he takes no contentment in it;" and if it be easy to want praise when it is denied, yet it is harder not to be delighted with it when it is offered. But there is much reason that we should put re-

straints upon ourselves, lest if we be praised without desert, we find a greater judgment of God; or if we have done well and received praise for it, we lose all our reward, which God hath deposited for them that "receive not their good things in this life. For as silver is tried in the melter, and gold in the crucible; so is a man tried by the mouth of him that praises him;" that is, he is either clarified from his dross by looking upon the praise as a homily to teach and an instrument to invite his duty; or else, if he be already pure, he is consolidated, strengthened in the sobriety of his spirit, and secludes himself closer into the strengths and securities of humility. Nay, this step of humility used, in very holy persons, to be enlarged to a delight in affronts and disreputation in the world. "Now I begin to be Christ's disciple," (said Ignatius the martyr, when in his journey to Rome he suffered perpetual revilings and abuse.) "St. Paul rejoiced in his infirmities and reproach; and all the apostles at Jerusalem went from the tribunal rejoicing that they were esteemed worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus." This is an excellent condition and degree of humility. But I choose to add one that is less, but yet in all persons necessary.

9. Fourthly, "Christ's humble man is careful never to speak any thing that may redound to his own praise," unless it be with a design of charity or duty, that either God's glory or the profit of his neighbour be concerned in it; but never speaking with a design to be esteemed learned or honourable. St. Arsenius had been tutor to three Cæsars,—Theodosius, Arcadius and Honorius: but afterwards when he became religious, no word escaped him that might represent and tell of his former greatness; and it is observable concerning St. Jerome, that although he was of *noble* extraction, yet in all his own writings, there is not the smallest intimation of it. This I desire to be understood only

to the sense and purposes of humility, and that we have no designs of vanity and fancy in speaking learnedly, or recounting our exterior advantages: but if either the profit of our brother or the glory of God, if either there be piety or charity in the design, it is lawful to publish all those excellences with which God hath distinguished us from others. The young Marquis of Castilion being to do public exercise in his course of philosophy, made it a case of conscience whether he were bound to dispute his best, fearing lest vanity might transport him in the midst of those praises which his collegiates might give him. It was an excellent consideration in the young gentleman: but in actions civil and human, since the danger is not so immediate, and a little complacency becoming the instrument of virtue and encouragement of studies may with like care be referred to God as the giver, and celebrate his praises; he might with more safety have done his utmost, it being in some sense a duty to encourage others, to give account of our graces and our labours, and all the appendant vanity may be quickly suppressed. A good name may give us opportunity of persuading others to their duty, especially in an age in which men choose their doctrines by the men that preach them; and St. Paul used his liberty when he was zealous for his Corinthian disciples, but restrained himself when it began to make reflections upon his own spirit. But although a good name be necessary, and in order to such good ends whether it may serve it is lawful to desire it; yet a great name, and a pompous honour, and secular greatness, hath more danger in it to ourselves than ordinarily it can have of benefit to others; and although a man may use the greatest honours to the greatest purposes, yet ordinary persons may not safely desire them; because it will be found very hard to have such mysterious and abstracted considerations, as to separate all our personal interest

from the public end. To which I add this consideration, that the contempt of honour, and the instant pursuit of humility, is more effective of the ghostly benefit of others, than honours and great dignities can be, unless it be rarely and very accidentally.

10. If we need any new incentives to the practice of this grace, I can say no more, but that humility is truth, and pride is a lie; that the one glorifies God, the other dishonours him; humility makes men like angels, pride makes angels to become devils; that pride is folly, humility is the temper of a holy spirit and excellent wisdom; that humility is the way to glory, pride to ruin and confusion: humility makes saints on earth, pride undoes them; humility beatifies the saints in heaven, and "the elders cast their crowns at the foot of the throne;" pride disgraces a man among all the societies of earth; God loves one, and Satan solicits the cause of the other, and promotes his own interest in it most of all. And there is no one grace in which Christ propounded himself imitable, so signally as in this of meekness and humility: for the enforcing of which he undertook the condition of a servant, and a life of poverty, and a death of disgrace; and washed the feet of his disciples, and even of Judas himself, that his action might be turned into a sermon to preach this duty, and to make it as eternal as his own story.

THE PRAYER.

O holy and eternal Jesus, who wert pleased to lay aside the glories and incomprehensible majesty which clothed thy infinity from before the beginning of creatures, and didst put a cloud upon thy brightness, and wert invested with the impure and imperfect broken robe of

human nature, and didst abate those splendours which broke through the veil, commanding devils not to publish thee, and men not to proclaim thy excellences, and the apostles not to reveal those glories of thine which they discovered encircling thee upon mount Tabor in thy transfiguration, and didst by perpetual homilies and symbolical mysterious actions, as with deep characters, engrave humility into the spirit of thy disciples and the discipline of Christianity; teach us to approach near to these thy glories which thou hast so covered with a cloud that we might without amazement behold thy excellences; make us to imitate thy gracious condescensions; take from us all vanity and fantastic complacencies in our own persons or actions: and when there arises a reputation consequent to the performance of any part of our duty, make us to reflect the glory upon thee, suffering nothing to adhere to our own spirits but shame at our own imperfection, and thankfulness to thee for all our assistances: let us never seek the praise of men by unhand-some actions, from flatteries and unworthy discourses, nor entertain the praise with delight, though it proceed from better principles; but fear and tremble, lest we deserve punishment, or lose a reward which thou hast deposited for all them that seek thy glory, and despise their own, that they may imitate the example of their Lord. Thou, O Lord, didst triumph over sin and death; subdue also my proud understanding and my prouder affections, and bring me under thy yoke; that I may do thy work, and obey my superiors, and be a servant of all my brethren in their necessities, and esteem myself inferior to all men by a deep sense of my own unworthiness, and in all things may obey thy laws, and conform to thy precedents, and enter into thine inheritance, O holy and eternal Jesus. Amen.

DISCOURSE XIX

Of the Institution and Reception of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

1. As the sun among the stars, and man among the sublunary creatures, is the most eminent and noble, the prince of the inferiors. and their measure, or their guide: so is this action among all the instances of religion; it is the most perfect and consummate, it is an union of mysteries, and a consolidation of duties; it joins God and man, and confederates all the societies of men in mutual complexions, and the entertainments of an excellent charity; it actually performs all that could be necessary for man, and it presents to man as great a thing as God could give; for it is impossible any thing should be greater than himself. And when God gave his Son to the world, it could not be but he should "give us all things else;" and therefore this blessed sacrament is a consigning us to all felicities, because after a mysterious and ineffable manner we receive him who is light and life, the fountain of grace, and the sanctifier of our secular comforts, and the author of holiness and glory. But as it was at first, so it hath been ever since; "Christ came into the world, and the world knew him not:" so Christ hath remained in the world by the communications of this sacrament, and yet he is not rightly understood, and less truly valued. But Christ may say to us as once to the woman of Samaria, "Woman, if thou didst know the gift of God, and who it is that speaks to thee, thou wouldst ask him:" so if we were so wise, or so fortunate, to know the excellency of this gift of the Lord, it would fill us full of wonder and adoration, joy and thankfulness, great hopes and actual felicities, making us heirs of glory by the great additions and present increment of grace.

2. "After supper Jesus took bread, and blessed it," and made it to be a heavenly gift: He gave them bread, and told them that it was "his body;" that body which was broken for the redemption of man, for the salvation of the world. St. Paul calls it bread even after consecration; "The bread which we break, is it not the communication of the body of Christ?" So that by divine faith we are taught to express our belief of this mystery in these words; [The bread, when it is consecrated and made a sacramental, is the body of our Lord; and the fraction and distribution of it is the communication of that body which died for us upon the cross.] He that doubts of either of the parts of this proposition must either think, that Christ was not able to verify his word, and to make bread by his benediction to become to us to be his body; or that St. Paul did not well interpret and understand this mystery, when he called it bread. Christ reconciles them both, calling himself "the bread of life:" and if we be offended at it, because it is alive, and therefore less apt to become food, we are invited to it because it is bread; and if the sacrament to others seem less mysterious, because it is bread, we are heightened in our faith and reverence because it is life:* the bread of the sacrament is the life of our soul, and the body of our Lord is now conveyed to us by being the bread of the sacrament. And if we consider how easy it is to faith, and how impossible it seems to curiosity, we shall be taught confidence and modesty; a resigning our understanding to the voice of Christ and his apostles, and yet expressing our own articles as Christ did, in indefinite significations. And possibly it may not well consist with our duty to be inquisitive into the secrets of the kingdom, which we see by plain event hath divided the church almost

as much as the sacrament hath united it, and which can only serve the purposes of the school and of evil men, to make questions for that, and factions for these, but promote not the ends of a holy life, obedience, or charity.

3. Some so observe the literal sense of the words, that they understand them also in a natural: some so alter them by metaphors and preternatural significations, that they will not understand them at all in a proper. We see it, we feel it, we taste it, and we smell it to be bread; and by philosophy we are led into a belief of that substance whose accidents these are, as we are to believe that to be fire which burns and flames and shines: but Christ also affirmed concerning it, "This is my body:" and if faith create an assent as strong as its object is infallible, or can be as certain in its conclusion as sense is certain in its apprehensions, we must at no hand doubt but that it is Christ's body. Let the sense of that be what it will, so that we believe those words, and (whatsoever that sense is which Christ intended) that we no more doubt in our faith than we do in our sense, then our faith is not reprovable. It is hard to do so much violence to our faith, as not to believe it to be Christ's body. But it should be considered, that no interest of religion, no saying of Christ, no reverence of opinion, no sacredness of the mystery is disavowed, if we believe both what we *hear* and what we *see*. He that believes it to be bread, and yet verily to be Christ's body, is only tied by implication to believe God's omnipotence, or that he who affirmed it can also verify it. And they that are forward to believe the change of substance, can intend no more but that it be believed verily to be the body of our Lord. And if they think it impossible to reconcile its being bread with the verity of being Christ's body, let them remember that themselves are put to more difficulties, and to admit of more miracles, and to contradict more sciences, and

* Not all the *Papery* which runs through Taylor's theory of the sacrament, can hide his piety, or hinder us from profiting by this discourse.—Ed.

to refuse the testimony of sense, in affirming the special manner of transubstantiation. And therefore it were safer to adapt the words in their first sense, in which we shall no more be at war with reason, nor so much with sense, and not at all with faith. And for persons of the contradictory persuasion, who to avoid the natural sense affirm it only to be figurative since their design is only to make this sacrament to be Christ's body in the sense of faith, and not of philosophy, they may remember that its being really present does not hinder but that all that reality may be spiritual; and if it be Christ's body, so it be not affirmed such in a natural sense and manner, it is still only the object of faith and spirit; and if it be affirmed only to be spiritual, there is then no danger to faith in admitting the words of Christ's institution, "this is my body." I suppose it to be a mistake, to think that whatsoever is real must be natural; and it is no less to think spiritual to be only figurative; that is too much, and this is too little. Philosophy and faith may well be reconciled; and whatsoever objection can invade this union may be cured by modesty. And if we profess we understand not the manner of this mystery, we say no more but that it is a mystery; and if it had been necessary we should have construed it into the most latent sense, Christ himself would have given a Clavis, and taught the church to unlock so great a secret. Christ said, "this is my body, this is my blood: St. Paul said, the bread of blessing that we break is the communication of the body of Christ, and the chalice which we bless is the communication of the blood of Christ; and, we are all one body, because we eat of one bread." One proposition as well as the other is the matter of faith, and the latter of them is also of sense; one is as literal as the other; and he that distinguishes in his belief, as he may place the impropriety upon which part he please, and either say it is improperly called bread, or

improperly called Christ's body; so he can have nothing to secure his proposition from error, or himself from boldness, in decreeing concerning mysteries against the testimonies of sense, or beyond the modesty and simplicity of Christian faith. Let us love and adore the abyss of divine wisdom and goodness, and entertain the sacrament with just and holy receptions; and then we shall receive all those fruits of it which an earnest disputer, or a peremptory dogmatist, whether he happen right or wrong, hath no warrant to expect upon the interest of his opinion.

1. In the institution of this sacrament Christ manifested, First, his almighty power, Secondly, his infinite wisdom, and Thirdly, his unspeakable charity. First, his power is manifest in making the symbols to be the instruments of conveying himself to the spirit of the receiver: he nourishes the soul with bread, and feeds the body with a sacrament; he makes the body spiritual by his graces there ministered, and makes the spirit to be united to his body by a participation of the divine nature: in the sacrament that body which is reigning in heaven is exposed upon the table of blessing, and his body which was broken for us is not broken again, and yet remains impassible. Every consecrated portion of bread and wine does exhibit Christ entirely to the faithful receiver; and yet Christ remains one, while he is wholly ministered in ten thousand portions. So long as we call these mysterious, and make them intricate to exercise our faith, and to represent the wonder of the mystery, and to increase our charity: our being inquisitive into the abyss can have no evil purposes. God hath instituted the rite in visible symbols, to make the secret grace as presential and discernible as it might, that by an instrument of sense our spirits might be accommodated as with an exterior object to produce an internal act. But it is the prodigy of a miraculous

power, by instruments so easy to produce effects so glorious. This then is the object of wonder and adoration.

5. Secondly, And this effect of power does also characterize the divine wisdom, which hath ordained such symbols, which not only, like spittle and clay toward the curing blind eyes, proclaim an almighty power, but they are apposite and proper to signify a duty, and become to us like the word of life, and from bread they turn into a homily. For therefore our wisest Master hath appointed bread and wine, that we may be corporeally united to him; that as the symbols becoming nutriment are turned into the substance of our bodies, so Christ being the food of our souls should assimilate us, making us partakers of the divine nature. It also tells us, that from hence we derive life and holy motion; "for in him we live, and move, and have our being." He is the staff of our life, and the light of our eyes, and the strength of our spirit; he is the viand for our journey, and the antepast of heaven. And because this holy mystery was intended to be a sacrament of union, that lesson is morally represented in the symbols; that as the salutary juice is expressed from many clusters running into one chalice, and the bread is a mass made of many grains of wheat; so we also (as the apostle infers from hence, himself observing the analogy) should "be one bread and one body, because we partake of that one bread." And it were to be wished that from hence also all Christians would understand a signification of another duty, and that they would often communicate, as remembering that the soul may need a frequent ministration, as well as the body its daily proportion. This consideration of the divine wisdom is apt to produce reverence, humility, and submission of our understanding to the immensity of God's unsearchable abysses.

6. Thirdly, But the story of the love of our

dearest Lord is written in largest characters, who not only was at that instant busy in doing man the greatest good, even when man was contriving his death and his dishonour, but contrived to represent his bitter passion to us without any circumstances of horror, in symbols of pleasure and delight; that "we may taste and see how gracious our Lord is," who would not transmit the record of his passion to us in any thing that might trouble us. No love can be greater than that which is so beatifical as to bestow the greatest good; and no love can be better expressed than that which, although it is productive of the greatest blessings, yet is curious also to observe the smallest circumstances. And not only both these, but many other circumstances and arguments of love concur in the holy sacrament. First, It is a tenderness of affection that ministers wholesome physic with arts and instruments of pleasure: and such was the charity of our Lord, who brings health to us in a golden chalice; life, not in the bitter drugs of Egypt, but in spirits and quintessences; giving us apples of paradise, at the same time yielding food and health and pleasure. Secondly, Love desires to do all good to its beloved object, and that is the greatest love which gives us the greatest blessings: and the sacrament therefore is the argument of his greatest love; for in it we receive the honey and the honey-comb, the paschal lamb with his bitter herbs, Christ with all his griefs, and his passion with all the salutary effects of it. Thirdly, Love desires to be remembered, and to have his object in perpetual representment: and this sacrament Christ designed to that purpose, that he who is not present to our eyes, might always be present to our spirits. Fourthly, Love demands love again, and to desire to be beloved is of itself a great argument of love: and as God cannot give us a greater than his love, which is himself with an excellency of relation to us superadded; so what greater

demonstration of it can he make to us, than to desire us to love him with as much earnestness and vehemency of desire, as if we were that to him which he is essentially to us, the author of our being and our blessing? Fifthly, And yet to consummate this love, and represent it to be the greatest and most excellent, the holy Jesus hath in this sacrament designed that we should be united in our spirits with him, incorporated to his body, partake of his divine nature, and communicate in all his graces: and love hath no expression beyond this, that it desires to be united unto its object. So that what Moses said to the men of Israel, "What nation is so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things for which we call upon him?" we can enlarge in the meditation of this holy sacrament: for now the Lord our God calls upon us, not only to be nigh unto him, but to be all one with him; not only as he was in the incarnation, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, but also to communicate in spirit, in grace, in nature, in divinity itself.

7. Upon the strength of the premises we may sooner take an estimate of the graces which are conveyed to us in the reception and celebration of this holy sacrament and sacrifice. For it is a commemoration and representment of Christ's death, so it is a commemorative sacrifice: as we receive the symbols and the mystery, so it is a sacrament. In both capacities the benefit is next to infinite. First, for whatsoever Christ, did at the institution, the same he commanded the church to do in remembrance and repeated rites; and himself also does the same thing in heaven for us, making perpetual intercession for his church, the body of his redeemed ones, by presenting to his Father, his death and sacrifice: there he sits a high priest continually, and offers still the same one perfect sacrifice, that is, still represents it as having been once finished and consummate in order to perpetual and never-failing events. And this also his ministers

do on earth; they offer up the same sacrifice to God, the sacrifice of the cross, by prayers and a commemorating rite and representation according to his holy institution. And as all the effects of grace and the titles of glory were purchased for us on the cross, and the actual mysteries of redemption perfected on earth, but are applied to us and made effectual to single persons and communities of men by Christ's intercession in heaven; so also they are promoted by acts of duty and religion here on earth, that we may be "workers together with God," (as St. Paul expresses it) and in virtue of the eternal and all sufficient sacrifice may offer up our prayers and our duty, and by representing that sacrifice may send up together with our prayers an instrument of their graciousness and acceptance. The funeral of a deceased friend is not only performed at his first interring, but in the monthly minds and anniversary commemorations; and our grief returns upon the sight of a picture, or upon any instance which our dead friend desired us to preserve as his memorial: we "celebrate and exhibit the Lord's death" in sacrament and symbol: and this is that great express, which when the church offers to God the Father, it obtains all those blessings which that sacrifice purchased. Themistocles snatched up the son of King Admetus, and held him between himself and death, to mitigate the rage of the king, and prevailed accordingly. Our very holding up the Son of God, and representing him to his Father, is the doing an act of mediation and advantage to ourselves in the virtue and efficacy of the mediator. As Christ is a priest in heaven for ever, and yet does not sacrifice himself afresh, nor yet without a sacrifice could he be a priest, but by a daily ministration and intercession represents his sacrifice to God, and offers himself as sacrificed; so he does upon earth by the ministry of his servants; he is offered to God, that is, he is by prayers and the sacrament repre-

sented or "offered up to God as sacrificed," which, in effect, is a celebration of his death, and the applying it to the present and future necessities of the church, as we are capable, by a ministry like to his in heaven. It follows then, that the celebration of this sacrifice be in its proportion an instrument of applying the proper sacrifice to all the purposes which it first designed; it is, ministerially and by application, an instrument propitiatory, it is eucharistical, it is a homage, and an act of adoration, and it is impretatory, and obtains for us and for the whole church all the benefits, of the sacrifice, which is now celebrated and applied; that is, as this rite is the remembrance and ministerial celebration of Christ's sacrifice, so it is destined to do honour to God, to express the homage and duty of his servants, to acknowledge his supreme dominion, to give him thanks and worship, to beg pardon, blessings, and supply of all our needs. And its profit is enlarged not only to the persons celebrating, but to all for whom they design it, according to the nature of sacrifices and prayers, and all such solemn actions of religion.*

8. Secondly, If we consider this, not as the act and ministry of ecclesiastical persons, but as the duty of the whole church communicating, that is, as it is a sacrament, so it is like the springs of Eden, from whence issue many rivers, or the trees of celestial Jerusalem, bearing various kinds of fruit. For whatsoever was offered in the sacrifice, is given in the sacrament; and whatsoever the Testament bequeaths, the holy mysteries dispense. First, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him;" Christ in his temple and his resting-place, and the worthy communicant is

in sanctuary and a place of protection: and every holy soul having feasted at his table may say as St. Paul, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." So that "to live is Christ: Christ is our life, and he dwells in the body and the spirit of every one that eats his flesh, and drinks his blood. Happy is that man that sits at the table of angels, that puts his hand into the dish with the king of all the creatures, and feeds upon the eternal Son of God, joining things below with things above, heaven with earth, life with death, "that mortality might be swallowed up of life," and sin be destroyed by the inhabitation of its greatest conqueror. And now I need not enumerate any particulars, since the Spirit of God hath assured us that Christ enters into our hearts, and takes possession, and abides there; that we are made temples and celestial mansions; that we are all one with our Judge, and with our Redeemer: that our Creator is bound unto his creature with bonds of charity which nothing can dissolve, unless our own hands break them; that man is united with God, and our weakness is fortified by his strength, and our mysteries wrapped up in the golden leaves of glory. Secondly, Hence it follows that the sacrament is an instrument of reconciling us to God, and taking off the remnant guilt, and stain, and obligations of our sins. "This is the blood that was shed for you for the remission of sins. For there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." And such are all they who worthily eat the flesh of Christ; by receiving him, they more and more receive remission of sins, redemption, sanctification, wisdom, and certain hopes of glory. For as the soul touching and united to the flesh of Adam contracts the stain of original misery and imperfection; so much the rather shall the soul united to the flesh of Christ receive pardon and purity, and all those blessed emanations from our union with the second Adam. But this is not to be understood, as if

* If the good bishop mean, that children will be benefited by being *prayed* for at the sacrament, by their parents; and that friends may remember friends there, with great propriety and profit, I most cordially concur in his opinion, and publicly bear testimony to the usefulness of "designing" the welfare of others at the sacrament.—ED.

the first beginnings of our pardon were in the holy communion; for then a man might come with his impurities along with him, and lay them on the holy table, to stain and pollute so bright a presence. No; first, repentance must "prepare the way of the Lord:" and in this holy rite those words of our Lord are verified, "He that is justified, let him be justified still," that is, here we may receive the increase of grace; and as it grows, so sin dies, and we are reconciled by nearer unions and approximations to God.

9. Thirdly, the holy sacrament is the pledge of glory and the earnest of immortality; for when we have received him who hath "overcome death, and henceforth dies no more," he becomes to us like the tree of life in paradise; and the consecrated symbols are like the seeds of an eternal duration, springing up in us to eternal life, nourishing our spirits with grace, which is but the prologue and the infancy of glory, and differs from it only as a child from a man. But God first raised up his Son to life, and by giving him to us hath also consigned us to the same state; for "our life is hid with Christ in God:" "When we lay down and cast aside the impurer robes of flesh, they are then but preparing for glory; and if by only the touch of Christ bodies were redintegrate and restored to natural perfections, how shall not we live for ever who eat his flesh and drink his blood?" It is the discourse of St. Cyril. Whatsoever the Spirit can convey to the body of the church, we may expect from this sacrament; for as the Spirit is the instrument of life and action, so the blood of Christ is the conveyance of his Spirit. And let all the mysterious places of holy scripture concerning the effects of Christ communicated in the blessed sacrament be drawn together in one scheme, we cannot but observe, that although they are so expressed as that their meaning may seem intricate and involved, yet they cannot be drawn to any

meaning at all, but what is as glorious in its sense as it is mysterious in the expression; and the more intricate they are, the greater is their purpose: no words being apt and proportionate to signify this spiritual secret, and the excellent effects of the spirit. A veil is drawn before all these testimonies, because the people were not able to behold the glory which they cover with their curtain; and "Christ dwelling in us, and giving us his flesh to eat and his blood to drink, and the hiding of our life with God, and the communication of the body of Christ, and Christ being our life," are such secret glories, that as the fruition of them is the portion of the other world, so also is the full perception and understanding of them: for therefore God appears to us in a cloud, and his glories in a veil, that we understanding more of it by its concealment than we can by its open face, which is too bright for our weak eyes, may with more piety also entertain the greatness by these indefinite and mysterious significations than we can by plain and direct intuitions, which like the sun in a *direct* ray enlightens the object, but confounds the organ.

10. I should but in other words describe the same glories, if I should add, that this holy sacrament does enlighten the spirit of man, and clarify it with spiritual discernings; for as he was to the two disciples at Emmaus, so also to other faithful people. "Christ is known in the breaking of bread;" that it is a great defence against the hostilities of our spiritual enemies, this holy bread being like the cake in Gideon's camp, overturning the tents of Midian; that it is the relief of our sorrows, the antidote and preservative of souls, the viand of our journey, the guard and passport of our death, the wine of angels; that it is more healthful than rhubarb, more pleasant than Cassia; that the betel and lareca of the Indians, the moly or nepenthe of Pliny, the lirinon of the Persians, the balsam of Judæa, the manna of Israel, the honey of

Jonathan, are but weak expressions to tell us that that this is excellent above art and nature, and that nothing is good enough in philosophy to become its emblem. All these must needs fall very short of those plain words of Christ, "This is my body." The other may become the ecstasies of piety, the transportation of joy and wonder, and are like the discourse of St. Peter upon mount Tabor, he was resolved to say some great thing, but he knew not what: but when we remember that the body of our Lord and his blood is communicated to us in the bread and the chalice of blessing, we must sit down and rest ourselves, for this is "the mountain of the Lord," and we can go no farther.*

11. In the next place it will concern our inquiry to consider how we are to prepare ourselves: for at the gate of life a man may meet with death: and although this holy sacrament be like manna, in which the obedient find the relishes of obedience, the chaste of purity, the meek persons of content and humility; yet vicious and corrupted palates, find also the gust of death and colicoquintida. The Sybarites invited their women to their solemn sacrifices a full year before the solemnity, that they might by previous dispositions and a long foresight attend with gravity and fairer order the celebration of the rites. And it was a reasonable answer of Pericles, to one that asked him why he, being a philosophical and severe person, came to a wedding trimmed and adorned like a paranymp; "I come adorned to an adorned person," trimmed, to a bridegroom. And we also, if we come to the marriage of the Son with the soul, (which marriage is celebrated in this sacred mystery) and have not on a wedding-garment, shall be cast into outer darkness, the portion of undressed and unprepared souls.

12. For from this sacrament are excluded all

* There is not a word nor a figure in all this, too strong for the fact, if the meaning be that the sacrament implies and pledges all these blessings, as the fruits of the one sacrifice of Christ.—Ed.

unbaptized persons, and such who lie in a known sin, of which they have not purged themselves by the apt and proper instruments of repentance. For if the paschal lamb was not to be eaten but by persons pure and clean according to the sanctifications of the law; the Son of God can less endure impurities of the spirit, than God could suffer the uncleannesses of the law. St. Paul hath given us instruction in this: First, "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat: for he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." That is, although in the church of Corinth, by reason of the present schism, the public discipline of the church was neglected, and every man permitted to himself; yet even then, no man was obliged from his duty of private repentance, and holy preparations to the perception of so great a mystery: that the Lord's body may be discerned from common nutriment. Now nothing can so unhallow and desecrate the rite as the remanent affection to a sin, or a crime unrepented of. And self-examination is prescribed, not for itself, but in order to abolition of sin and death: for itself is a relative term and an imperfect duty, whose very nature is in order to something *beyond* it. And this was in the primitive church understood with so much severity, that if a man had relapsed after one public repentance into a foul crime, he was never again readmitted to the holy communion; and the fathers of the council of Eliberis call it a mocking and jesting at the communion of our Lord, to give it once again after a repentance and a relapse, and a second or third postulation. And indeed we make a sport of the greatest instruments of religion, when we come to them after an habitual vice, whose face we have, it may be wetted with a tear, and breathed upon it with a sigh, and abstained from the worst of crimes for two or three days, and come to the sacrament to be purged, and to take our rise by going

a little back from our sin, that afterwards we may leap into it with more violence, and enter into its utmost angle: this is dishonouring the body of our Lord, and deceiving ourselves. Christ and Belial cannot cohabit; unless we have left all our sins, and have no fondness of affection towards them, unless we hate them, (which then we shall best know when we leave them, and with complacency entertain their contraries:) not till then Christ hath washed our feet: and then he invites us to his holy supper. Hands dipped in blood, or polluted with unlawful gains, or stained with the spots of flesh, are most unfit to handle the holy body of our Lord, and minister nourishment to the soul. Christ loves not to enter into the mouthful of cursings, oaths, blasphemies, revilings or evil speakings; and a heart full of vain and vicious thoughts stinks like the lake of Sodom; he finds no rest there, and when he enters he is vexed with the unclean conversation of the impure inhabitants, and flies from thence with the wings of a dove, that he may retire to pure and whiter habitations. St. Justin Martyr, reckoning the predispositions required of every faithful soul for the entertainment of his Lord, says, that "it is not lawful for any to eat the eucharist, but to him that is washed in the laver of regeneration for the remission of sins, that believes Christ's doctrine to be true, and that lives according to the discipline of the holy Jesus." And therefore St. Ambrose refused to minister the holy communion to the emperor Theodosius, till by public repentance he had reconciled himself to God and the society of faithful people, after the furious and choleric rage and slaughter committed at Thessalonica. And as this act was so like a cancelling and a circumvallation of the holy mysteries, and in that sense and so far was a proper duty for a prelate, to whose dispensation the rites are committed, so it was an act of duty to the emperor, of paternal and tender care, not of proper authority

or jurisdiction, which he could not have over his prince, but yet had a care and the supervision of a teacher over him, whose soul St. Ambrose had betrayed, unless he had represented his indisposition to communicate, by expressions of magisterial or doctoral authority and truth. For this holy sacrament is a nourishment of spiritual life, and therefore cannot with effect be ministered to them who are in the state of spiritual death; it is giving a cordial to a dead man; and although the outward rite be ministered, yet the grace of the sacrament is not communicated, and therefore it were well that they also abstained from the rite itself. For a fly can boast of as much privilege as a wicked person can receive from this holy feast: and oftentime pays his life for his access to forbidden delicacies, as certainly as they.

13. It is more generally thought by the doctors of the church, that our blessed Lord administered the sacrament to Judas, although he knew he sold him to the Jews. Some others deny it, and suppose Judas departed presently after the sop given him, before he communicated. However it was, Christ, who was Lord of the sacraments, might dispense it as he pleased; but we must minister and receive it according to the rules he hath since described: but it becomes a precedent to the church in all succeeding ages, although it might also have in it something extraordinary and apter to the first institution; for because the fact of Judas was secret, not yet made notorious, Christ chose rather to admit him into the rites of external communion, than to separate him with an open shame for a fault not yet made open. For our blessed Lord did not reveal the man and his crime till the very time of ministration, if Judas did communicate. But if Judas did not communicate, and that our blessed Lord gave him the sop at the paschal supper, or at the interval between it and the institution of his own, it is certain that Judas went out as soon as he was discovered,

and left this part of discipline upon record, that when a crime is made public and notorious, the governors of the church, according to their power, are to deny to give the blessed sacrament, till by repentance such persons be restored. In private sins, or sins not known by solemnities of law, or evidence of fact, good and bad are entertained in public communion; and it is not to be accounted a crime in them that minister it; because they cannot avoid it, or have not competent authority to separate persons, whom the public act of the church hath not separated: but if once a public separation be made, or that the fact is notorious, and the sentence of law is in such cases already declared, they that come, and he rejects them not, both pollute the blood of the everlasting covenant. And here it is applicable what God spake by the prophet, "If thou wilt separate the precious thing from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth."

But this is wholly a matter of discipline, arbitrary, and in the power of the church: nothing in it of divine commandment, but what belongs to the communicants themselves: for St. Paul reproves them that receive disorderly, but gives no orders to the Corinthian presbyters to reject any that present themselves. Neither did our blessed Lord leave any commandment concerning it, nor hath the holy scripture given rules or measures concerning its actual reduction to practice; neither who are to be separated, nor for what offences, nor by what authority, nor who is to be the judge. And indeed it is a judgment that can only belong to God, who knows the secrets of hearts, the degrees of every sin, the beginnings and portions of repentance, the sincerity of purposes, by what thoughts and designs men begin to be accepted, who are hypocrites, and who are true men. But when many and common men come to judge, they are angry upon trifling mistakes and weak disputes; they call that sin that angers their

party, or grieves their interest; they turn charity into pride, and admonition into tyranny; they set up a tribunal that themselves may sit higher, not that their brethren may walk more securely; and then concerning sins, in most cases, they are most incompetent judges; they do not know all their kinds; they miscall many; they are ignorant of the ingredient and constituent parts and circumstances; they themselves make false measures, and give out according to them, when they please; and when they list not, they can change the balance. When the matter is public, evident, and notorious, the man is to be admonished of his danger by the minister, but not by him to be forced from it: for the power of the minister of holy things is but the power of a preacher and a conseller, of a physician and a guide; it hath in it no coercion or violence, but what is indulged to it by human laws and by consent, which may vary as its principle.

Add to this that the grace of God can begin the work of repentance in an instant, and in what period or degree of repentance the holy communion is to be administered, no law of God declares; which therefore plainly allows it to every period, and leaves no difference, except where the discipline of the church and the authority of the supreme power doth intervene. For since we do not find in scripture that the apostles did drive from the communion of holy things even those whom they delivered over to Satan or other censures, we are left to consider that, in the nature of the thing, those who are in the state of weakness and infirmity have more need of the solemn prayers of the church, and therefore, by presenting themselves to the holy sacrament, approach towards that ministry which is the most effectual cure; especially since the very presenting themselves is an act of religion, and therefore supposes an act of repentance and faith, and other little introductions to its fair reception: and if they may be prayed for and prayed with, why they may not also be

communicated, which is the solemnity of the greatest prayer, is not yet clearly revealed.

This discourse relates only to private ministry: for when I affirm, that there is no command from Christ to all his ministers to refuse whom they are pleased to call scandalous, or sinners, I intend to defend good people from the tyranny and arbitrary power of those great companies of ministers, who in so many hundred places would have a judicature supreme in spirituals, which would be more intolerable than if they had in one province twenty thousand judges of life and death. But when the power of separation and interdiction is only in some eminent and authorized persons who take public cognizance of causes by solemnities of law, and exercise their power but in some rare instances, and then also for the public interest, in which although they may be deceived yet they are the most competent and likely judges, much of the inconvenience which might otherwise follow is avoided; and then it only remains that they consider, in what cases it can be a competent and a proper infliction upon sinners, to take from them that which is the means and ministry of grace and recovery; whether they have any warrant from Christ, or precedent in the apostle's practice, and how far. As for the forms and usages of the primitive church, they were hugely different, sometimes for one cause, and sometimes for another. Sometimes whole churches have been excommunicated; sometimes the criminal and all his household for his offence, as it happened in the excommunication of Andronicus and Thoms in Synesius, in the year 411: sometimes they were absolved and restored by lay-confessors, sometimes by emperors, as it happened to Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nice, who were absolved by Constantine from the sentence of excommunication inflicted by the Nicene fathers; and a monk did excommunicate Theodosius the younger. So that in this, there can be no certainty to make a

measure and a rule. The surest way, most agreeable to the precedents of Scripture and the analogy of the gospel, is, that "by the word of their proper ministry" all sinners should be separated from the holy communion; that is, threatened by the words of God with damnation, and fearful temporal dangers, if themselves, knowing an unrepented sin, and a remanent affection to sin, to be within them, shall dare to profane that body and blood of our Lord by so impure an address. The evil is to themselves, and if the ministers declare this powerfully, they are acquitted. But concerning other judgments or separations, the supreme power can forbid all assembling, and therefore can permit them to all, and therefore can deny them or grant them to single persons; and therefore when he by laws, makes separations in order to public benefit, they are to be obeyed, but it is not to be endured that single presbyters should upon vain pretences erect so a high tribunal and tyranny over consciences.

11. The duty of preparation, that I here discourse of, is such a preparation as is a disposition to life: it is not a matter of convenience or advantage to repent of our sins before the communion, but it is of absolute necessity; we perish if we neglect it: for we eat damnation, and Satan enters into us, not Christ. And this preparation is not the act of a day or a week; but it is a new state of life: no man that is an habitual sinner must come to this feast, till he hath wholly changed his course of life. And then, according as the actions of infirmity have made less or greater invasion upon peace and health, so are the acts of repentance to be proportioned, in which the greatness of the prevarications, their neighbourhood to death, or their frequent repetition, and the conduct of a spiritual man, are to give us counsel and determination. When a ravening and hungry wolf is destitute of prey, he eats the turf, and loads his stomach with the glebe he treads on; but as soon he finds better

food, he vomits up his first load. Our secular and sensual affections are loads of earth upon the conscience, and when we approach to the table of the Lord to eat the bread of the elect, and to drink the wine of angels, we must reject such impure adhesions, that holy persons being nourished with holy symbols, may be sanctified and receive the eternal reward of holiness.

15. But as none must come hither but they that are in the state of grace, or charity, and the love of God and their neighbours, and that the abolition of the state of sin is the necessary preparation, and is the action of years, and was not accepted as sufficient till the expiration of divers years by the primitive discipline, and in some cases not till the approach of death : so there is another preparation which is of less necessity, which supposes the state of grace, and that oil is burning in our lamps ; but yet it is a preparation of ornament, a trimming up the soul, a dressing the spirit with degrees and instances of piety and progresses of perfection ; and it consists in setting apart some portion of our time before the communion, that it be spent in prayer, in meditations, in renewing the vows of holy obedience, in examining our consciences, in mortifying our lesser irregularities, in devotions and actions of precise religion, in acts of faith, of hope, of charity, of zeal and holy desires, in acts of Eucharist or thanksgiving, of joy at the approach of so blessed an opportunity, and all the acts of virtue whatsoever, which have indefinite relation to this and to other mysteries ; but yet are especially to be exercised upon this occasion, because this is the most mysterious instrument of sanctification and perfection. There is no time or degree to be determined in this preparation ; but they “ to whom much is forgiven will love much ; and they who understand the excellence and holiness of the mystery, the glory of the guest that comes to inhabit, and the undecency of the closet of their hearts by reason of the adherences

of impurity, the infinite benefit then designed, and the increase of degrees by the excellence of these previous acts of holiness, will not be too inquisitive into the necessity of circumstances and measures, but do it heartily, and devoutly, and reverently, and as much as they can, ever esteeming it necessary, that the actions of so great solemnity should, by some actions of piety attending like handmaids, be distinguished from common employments, and remarked for the principal and most solemn of religious actions. The primitive church gave the holy sacrament to infants immediately after baptism, and by that act transmitted this proposition, that nothing was of absolute necessity but innocence and purity from sin, and a being in the state of grace ; other actions of religion are excellent additions to the dignity of the person and honour of the mystery, but they were such of which infants were not capable. The sum is this ; after the greatest consociation of religious duties for preparation, no man can be sufficiently worthy to communicate : let us take care that we be not unworthy, by bringing a guilt with us, or the remanent affection to a sin.

*Est gloriosus tamen convictus Dei ;
Sed illi qui invitatur, non qui invisus est.*

16. When the happy hour is come in which the Lord vouchsafes to enter into us, and dwell with us, and be united with his servants, we must then do the same acts over again with greater earnestness and intension ; confess the glories of God and thy own unworthiness, praise his mercy with ecstasy of thanksgiving and joy, make oblation of thyself, of all thy faculties and capacities, pray, and read, and meditate, and worship : and that thou mayest more opportunely do all this, rise early to meet the bridegroom, pray for special assistance, enter into the assembly of faithful people cheerfully attend there diligently, demean thyself reverently, and before any other meat or drink

receive the body of thy Saviour with pure hands, with holy intention, with a heart full of joy, and faith, and hope, and wonder, and eucharist. These things I therefore set down irregularly and without method, because in these actions no rule can be given to all persons; and only such a love and such a religion in general is to be recommended, which will overrun the banks, and not easily stand confined within the margin of rules and artificial prescriptions. Love and religion are boundless, and all acts of grace relating to the present mystery are fit and proportioned entertainments of our Lord. This only remember, that we are by the mystery of one bread confederated into one body, and into the communion of saints, and that the sacrifice which we then commemorate was designed by our Lord for the benefit of all his church: let us be sure to draw all faithful people into the society of the present blessing, joining with the holy man that ministers in prayers and offerings of that mystery for the benefit of all sorts of men, of Christ's catholic church. And it were also an excellent act of Christian communion, and agreeable to the practice of the church in all ages, to make an oblation to God for the poor; that as we are fed by Christ's body, so we also should *feed* Christ's body, making such returns as we can, a grain of frankincense in exchange for a province, an act of duty and Christian charity as eucharistical for the present grace, that all the body may rejoice and glory in the salvation of the Lord.

17. After thou hast received that pledge of immortality and antepast of glory, even the Lord's body in a mystery, leave not thy Saviour there alone, but attend him with holy thoughts and colloquies of prayer and eucharist. It was sometime counted infamous for a woman to entertain a second love, till the body of her dead husband was dissolved into ashes, and disappeared in the form of a body. And it were well, that so long as the consecrated

symbols remain within us according to common estimate, we should keep the flame bright, and the perfume of an actual devotion burning, that our communion be not a transient act, but a permanent and lasting intercourse with our Lord. But in this every man best knows his own opportunities and necessities of diversion. I only commend earnestly to practice, that every receiver should make a recollection of himself, and the actions of the day, that he improve it to the best advantage, that he shew unto our Lord all the defects of his house, all his poverty and weaknesses: and this let every man by such actions and devotions which he can best attend, and himself by the advice of a spiritual man finds of best advantage. I would not make the practice of religion, especially in such irregular instances, to be an art, or a burthen, or a snare to scrupulous persons: what St. Paul said in the case of charity, I say also in this; "He that sows plentifully shall reap plentifully, and he that sows sparingly shall gather at the same rate: let every man do as himself purposeth in his heart." Only it were well in this sacrament of love we had some correspondency, and proportionable returns of charity and religious affections.

18. Some religious persons have moved a question, whether it were better to communicate often or seldom: some thinking it more reverence to those holy mysteries to come but seldom; while others say, it is greater religion or charity to come frequently. But I suppose this question does not differ much from the dispute, "whether it is better to pray often, or to pray seldom?" For whatsoever is commonly pretended against a frequent communion, may in its proportion object against a solemn prayer: remanent affection to a sin, enmity with neighbours, secular avocations to the height of care and trouble: for these either are great inducencies in order to a holy prayer; or else are direct irregularities, and unhallow the prayer.

And the celebration of the holy sacrament is, in itself and its own formality, a sacred, solemn, and ritual prayer, in which we invoke God by the merits of Christ, expressing that adjuration not only in words, but in actual representment and commemoration of his passion. And if the necessities of the church were well considered, we should find that a daily sacrifice of prayer and a daily prayer of sacrifice, were no more but what her condition requires: and I would to God the governors of churches would take care, that the necessities of kings and kingdoms, of churches and states, were represented to God by the most solemn and efficacious intercessions; and Christ hath taught us none greater than the praying in the virtue and celebration of his sacrifice. And this is the counsel that the church received from Ignatius; "hasten frequently to approach the eucharist, the glory of God. For when this is daily celebrated, we break the powers of Satan, who turns all his actions into hostilities and darts of fire." But this concerns the ministers of religion, who living in communities and colleges must make religion the business of their lives, and support kingdoms, and serve the interest of kings by the prayer of a daily sacrifice. And yet in this ministry the clergy may serve their own necessary affairs, if the ministration be divided into courses, as it was by the economy and wisdom of Solomon for the temple.

19 But concerning the communion of secular and lay persons, the consideration is something different. St. Austin gave this answer to it,— "to receive the sacrament every day I neither praise nor reprove; at least let them receive it every Lord's day." And this he spake to husbandmen and merchants. At the first commencement of Christianity, while the fervours apostolical and the calentures of infant christendom did last, the whole assembly of faithful people communicated every day; and this lasted in Rome and Spain until the time of St. Jerome:

concerning which diligence he gives the same censure which I now recited from St. Austin; for it suffered inconvenience by reason of a declining piety, and the intervening of secular interests. But then it came to once a week; and yet that was not everywhere strictly observed. But that it be received once every fortnight St. Hierome counsels very strongly to Rustochium a holy virgin; "let the virgins confess their sins twice every month, or oftener, and being fortified with the communion of the Lord's body, let them manfully fight against the devil's forces and attempts." A while after, it came to once a month, then once a year, then it fell from that to two; till all the Christians in the west were commanded to communicate every Easter by the decree of a great council, above five hundred years since. But the church of England, finding that too little, hath commanded all her children to receive thrice every year at least, intending that they should come oftener; but of this she demands an account. For it hath fared with this sacrament as with other actions of religion; which have descended from flames to still fires, from fires to sparks, from sparks to embers, from embers to smoke, from smoke to nothing. And although the public declension of piety is such, that in this present conjuncture of things it is impossible men should be reduced to a daily communion; yet that they are to communicate frequently is so a duty, that as no excuse but impossibility can make the omission innocent, so the loss and consequent want is infinite and invaluable.

20. For the holy communion being a remembrance and sacramental repetition of Christ's passion, and the application of his sacrifice to us and the whole catholic church; as they who seldom communicate delight not to remember the passion of our Lord, and sin against his very purpose and one of the designs of institution; so he cares not to receive the benefits of the sacrifice who neglects their application, and reducing

them to actual profit and reception. "Whence came the sanctimony of the primitive Christians? whence came their strict observation of the Divine commandments? whence was it that they persevered in holy actions with hope and an unwearying diligence? from whence did their despising worldly things come, and living with common possession, and the distributions of an universal charity? whence came these and many other excellences, but from a constant prayer, and a daily eucharist? they who every day represented the death of Christ, every day were ready to die for Christ." This was the discourse of an ancient and excellent person. And if we consider this sacrament, as intended to unite the spirits and affections of the world, and that it is diffusive and powerful to this purpose, "for we are one body," (saith St. Paul) "because we partake of one bread," possibly we may have reason to say, that the wars of kingdoms, the animosity of families, the infinite multitude of law-suits, the personal hatreds, and the universal want of charity, which hath made the world miserable and wicked, may in a great degree be attributed to the neglect of this great symbol and instrument of charity. The chalice of the sacrament is called by St. Paul "the cup of blessing;" and if children need every day to beg blessing of their parents, if we also thirst not after this cup of blessing, blessing may be far from us. It is called "the communion of the blood of Christ;" and it is not imaginable that man should love heaven, or felicity, or his Lord, that desires not perpetually to ~~bathe~~ bathe in that salutary stream, the blood of the holy Jesus, the immaculate lamb of God.

21. But I find that the religious fears of men are pretended as a colour to excuse this irreligion. Men are wicked, and not prepared, and busy, and full of cares and affairs of the world, and cannot come with due preparation: and therefore better not come at all: nay, men are not ashamed to say, they are at enmity with

certain persons, and therefore cannot come. Concerning those persons who are unprepared because they are in a state of sin or uncharitableness, it is true, they must not come; but this is so far from excusing their not coming, that they increase their sin, and secure misery to themselves, because they do not "lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset them," that they *may* come to the marriage-supper. It is as if we should excuse ourselves from the duties of charity, by saying we are uncharitable; from giving alms, by saying we are covetous; from chastity, by saying we are lascivious. To such men it is just that they graze with the goats, because they refuse to wash their hands, that they may come to the supper of the lamb. Concerning those that pretend cares and incumbrances of the world; if their affairs make sin and impure affections to stick upon them, they are in the first consideration: but if their office be necessary, just, or charitable, they imitate Martha, and choose the less perfect part when they neglect the offices of religion for duties economical. But the other sort have more pretence and fairer virtue in their outside. They suppose, like the Persian princes, the seldomer such mysterious rites are seen, the more reverence we shall have, and they the more majesty: and they are fearful lest the frequent attendance on them should make us less to value the great earnest of our redemption and immortality. It is a pious consideration, but not becoming them: for it cannot be that the sacrament be undervalued by frequent reception, without the great unworthiness of the persons, so turning God's grace into lightness and loathing manna: nay, it cannot be without an unworthy communication; for he that receives worthily increases in the love of God and religion, and the fires of the altar are apt to kindle our sparks into a flame; and when Christ our Lord enters into us, and we grow weary of him, or less fond of his frequent entrance and perpetual

cohabitation, it is an infallible sign we have let his enemy in, or are preparing for it. For this is the difference between secular and spiritual objects: nothing in this world hath any pleasure in it long beyond the hope of it; for the possession or enjoyment is found so empty, that we grow weary of it; but whatsoever is spiritual, and in order to God, is less before we have it, but in the fruition it swells our desires, and enlarges the appetite, and makes us more receptive and forward in the entertainment: and therefore those acts of religion that set us forward in time, and backward in affection, do declare that we have not well done our duty, but have communicated unworthily. So that the mending of our fault will answer the objection. Communicate with more devotion, and repent with greater contrition, and walk with more caution, and pray more earnestly, and meditate diligently, and receive with reverence and godly fear; and we shall find our affections increase together with the spiritual emolument; ever remembering that pious and wise advice of St. Ambrose, "Receive every day, that which may profit thee every day. But he that is not disposed to receive it every day, is not fit to receive it every year."

22. And if after all diligence it be still feared that a man is not well prepared, I must say that it is a *scruple*; that is, a trouble beyond a doubt and without reason, next to superstition and the dreams of religion; and it is nourished by imagining, that no duty is accepted, if it be less than perfection, and that God is busied in heaven, not only to destroy the wicked, and to dash in pieces vessels of dishonour, but to "break a bruised reed" in pieces, and to cast the smoking flax into the flames of hell. In opposition to which we must know, that nothing makes us unprepared but an evil conscience, a state of sin, or a deadly act: but the lesser infirmities of our life, against which we daily strive, and for which we never have any kindness or

affections, and "not spots in these feasts of charity," but instruments of humility, and stronger invitations to come to those rites which are ordained for corroboratives against infirmities of the soul, and for the growth of the spirit in the strength of God. For those other acts of preparation which precede and accompany the duty, the better and more religiously they are done, they are indeed of more advantage, and honorary to the sacrament; yet he that comes in the state of grace, though he takes the opportunity upon a sudden offer, sins not: and in such indefinite duties, whose degrees are not described, it is good counsel to do our best; but it is ill to make them instruments of scruple, as if it were essentially necessary to do that in the greatest height, which is only intended for advantage and the fairer accommodation of the mystery. But these very acts, if they be esteemed necessary preparations to the sacrament, are the greatest arguments in the world, that it is best to communicate often; because the doing of that which must suppose the exercise of so many graces, must needs promote the interest of religion, and dispose strongly to habitual graces by our frequent and solemn repetition of the acts. It is necessary that every communicant be first examined concerning the state of his soul, by himself or his superior; and that very scrutiny is in admirable order towards the reformation of such irregularities which time and temptation, negligence and incuriousness, infirmity or malice have brought into the secret regions of our will and understanding. Now although this examination be therefore enjoined, that no man should approach to the holy table in the state of ruin and reprobation, and that therefore it is an act not of direct preparation, but an inquiry whether we be prepared or no; yet this very examination will find so many little irregularities, and so many great imperfections, that it will appear the more necessary to repair the breaches and

lesser ruins by such acts of piety and religion ; because every communication is intended to be a nearer approach to God, a farther step in grace, a progress towards glory, and an instrument of perfection ; and therefore upon the stock of our spiritual interests, for the purchase of a greater hope, and the advantages of a growing charity, ought to be frequently received. I end with the words of a pious and learned person : “ It is a vain fear and an imprudent reverence, that procrastinates and defers going to the Lord that calls them : they deny to go to the fire, pretending they are cold ; and refuse physic, because they need it.”—JOAN GERSON.

of the eucharist be to me a defence and shield, a nourishment and medicine, life and health, a means of sanctification and spiritual growth ; that I receiving the body of my dearest Lord may be one with his mystical body, and of the same spirit, united with indissoluble bonds of a strong faith, and a holy hope, and a never-failing charity, that from this veil I may pass into the visions of eternal clarity, from eating thy body to beholding thy face in the glories of thy everlasting kingdom, O blessed and eternal Jesus. Amen.

THE PRAYER.

O blessed and eternal Jesus, who gavest thyself a sacrifice for our sins, thy body for our spiritual food, thy blood to nourish our spirits, and to quench the flames of hell and lust, who didst so love us, who were thine enemies, that thou desiredst to reconcile us to thee, and becamest all one with us, that we may live the same life, think the same thoughts, love the same love, and be partakers of thy resurrection and immortality ; open every window of my soul, that I may be full of light, and may see the excellency of thy love, the merits of thy sacrifice, the bitterness of thy passion, the glories and virtues of the mysterious sacrament. Lord, let me ever hunger and thirst after this instrument of righteousness ; let me have no gust or relish of the unsatisfying delights of things below, but let my soul dwell in thee ; let me for ever receive thee spiritually, and very frequently communicate with thee sacramentally, and imitate thy virtues piously and strictly, and dwell in the pleasures of thy house eternally, Lord, thou hast prepared a table for me, against them that trouble me : let that holy sacrament

Considerations upon the Accidents happening on the Vespers of the Passion.

1. When Jesus had supped and sang a hymn, and prayed, and exhorted, and comforted his disciples with a farewell sermon, in which he repeated such of his former precepts as were now apposite to the present condition, and reinforced them with proper and pertinent argument, he went over the brook Cedron, and entered into a garden, and into the prologue of his passion : choosing that place for his agony and satisfactory pains, in which the first scene of human misery was represented, and where he might best attend the offices of devotion preparatory to his death. Besides this, he therefore departed from the house, that he might give opportunity to his enemies surprise, and yet not incommode the good man by whose hospitality they had eaten the paschal lamb ; so that he went “ like a lamb to the slaughter,” to the garden as to a prison, as if by an agreement with his persecutors he had expected their arrest, and stayed there to prevent their farther inquiry. For so great was his desire to pay our ransom, that himself did assist by a forward patience and active opportunity towards the persecution :

teaching us, that by an active zeal and a ready spirit we assist the designs of God's glory, though in our own sufferings and secular infelicities.

2. When he entered the garden, he left his disciples at the entrance of it, calling with him only Peter, James, and John: "he withdrew himself from the rest about a stone's cast, and began to be exceeding heavy." He was not sad till he had called them, (for his sorrow began when he pleased :) which sorrow he also chose to represent to those three who had seen his transfiguration, the earnest of his future glory, that they may see of how great glory, for our sakes, he disrobed himself; and that they also might by confronting those contradictory accidents observe, that God uses to dispense his comforts, the irradiations and emissions of his glory, to be preparatives to those sorrows with which our life must be allayed and seasoned; that none should refuse to partake of the sufferings of Christ, if either they have already felt his comforts, or hope hereafter to wear his crown. And it is not ill observed, that St. Peter, being the chief of the apostles and doctor of the circumcision, St. John, being a virgin, and St. James, the first of the apostles that was martyred, were admitted to Christ's greatest retirements and mysterious secresies, as being persons of so singular and eminent dispositions, to whom, according to the pious opinion of the church, especial coronets are prepared in heaven, besides the great "crown of righteousness," which in common shall beautify the heads of all the saints; meaning this, that doctors, virgins, and martyrs shall receive, even for their very state of life and accidental graces, more eminent degrees of accidental glory, like as the sun, reflecting upon the limpid fountain, receives its rays doubled, without any increment of its proper and natural light.

3. "Jesus began to be exceeding sorrowful, to be sore amazed and sad even to death." And

because he was now to suffer the pains of our sins, there began his passion whence our sins spring. From an evil heart and a prevaricating spirit all our sins arise; and "in the spirit of Christ" began his sorrow, where he truly felt the full value and demerit of sin, which we think not worthy of a tear or a hearty sigh, but he groaned and fell under the burthen. But therefore he took upon him this sadness, that our imperfect sorrow and contrition might be heightened in his example, and accepted in its union and confederacy with his. And Jesus still designed a farther mercy for us; for he sanctified the passion of fear, and hallowed natural sadnesses, that we might not think the infelicities of our nature and the calamities of our temporal condition to become criminal, so long as they make us not omit a duty, or dispose us to the election of a crime, or force us to swallow a temptation, nor yet to exceed the value of their impulsive cause. He that grieves for the loss of friends, and yet had rather lose all the friends he hath than lose the love of God, hath the sorrow of our Lord for his precedent. And he that fears death, and trembles at its approximation, and yet had rather die again than sin once, hath not sinned in his fear; Christ hath hallowed it, and the necessitous condition of his nature is his excuse. But it were highly to be wished, that in the midst of our caresses and levities of society, in our festivities and triumphal merriments, when we laugh at folly and rejoice in sin, we would remember that for those very merriments our blessed Lord felt a bitter sorrow; and not one vain and sinful laughter, but cost the holy Jesus a sharp pang and throes of passion.

4. Now that the holy Jesus began to taste the bitter cup, he betook him to his great antidote, which himself, the great physician of our souls, prescribed to all the world to cure their calamities, and to make them pass from miseries into virtue, that so they may arrive at glory; he

prays to his heavenly Father, he kneels down, and not only so, but "falls flat upon the earth," and would, in humility and fervent adoration, have descended low as the centre; he prays with an intensity great as his sorrow, and yet with a dereliction so great, and a conformity to the divine will so ready, as if it had been the most indifferent thing in the world for him to be delivered to death, or from it: for though his nature did decline death, as that which hath a natural horror and contradiction to the present interest of its preservation, yet when he looked upon it as his heavenly Father had put it into the order or redemption of the world, it was that baptism which he was "strengthened till he had accomplished." And now there is not in the world any condition of prayer which is essential to the duty, or any circumstances of advantage to its performance, but were concentrated in this one instance; humility of spirit; lowliness of deportment, importunity of desire, a fervent spirit, a lawful matter, resignation to the will of God, great love, the love of a son to his Father, (which appellative was the form of his address) perseverance, (he went thrice, and prayed the same prayer.) It was not long, and it was so retired as to have the advantages of a sufficient solitude and opportune recollection; for he was withdrawn from the most of his disciples: and yet not so alone as to lose the benefit of communion: for Peter and the two Boanerges were near him. Christ in this prayer, which was the most fervent that he ever made on earth, intending to transmit to all the world a precedent of devotion, to be transcribed and imitated: that we should cast all our cares, and empty them in the bosom of God, being content to receive such a portion of our trouble back again, which he assigns us for our spiritual enolument.

5. The holy Jesus having in a few words poured out torrents of innocent desires, was pleased still to interrupt his prayer, that he

might visit his charge, that little flock which was presently after scattered: he was careful of them in the midst of his agonies; they in his sufferings were fast asleep. He awakens them, gives them command to "watch and pray," that is, to be vigilant in the custody of their senses, and observant of all accidents, and to pray that they might be strengthened against all incursions of enemies and temptations: and then returns to prayer; and so a third time; his devotion still increasing with his sorrow. And when his prayer was full, and his sorrow come to a great measure, after the third, God sent his "angel to comfort him" and by that act of grace then only expressed, hath taught us to continue our devotions so long as our needs last. It may be God will not send a comforter till the third time, that is, after a long expectation, and a patient sufferance, and a lasting hope: in the interim God supports us with a secret hand, and in his own time will refresh the spirit with the visitations of his angels, and with the emissions of comfort from the Spirit, the Comforter. And know this also, that the holy angel, and the Lord of all the angels, stands by every holy person when he prays; and although he draws before his glories the curtain of a cloud, yet in every instant he takes care we shall not perish, and in a just season dissolves the cloud, and makes it to distil in holy dew, and drops sweet as manna, pleasant as nard, and wholesome as the breath of heaven. And such was the consolation which the holy Jesus received by the ministry of the angel, representing to Christ the Lord of the angels, how necessary it was that he should die for the glory of God: that in his passion His justice, wisdom, goodness, power, and mercy should shine; that unless he died all the world should perish, but his blood should obtain their pardon; and that it should open the gates of heaven, establish a holy church, be productive of innumerable adoptive children to his Father, whom himself should make heirs of glory;

and that his passion should soon pass away ; his father hearing and granting his prayer, that the cup should pass speedily, though indeed it should pass through him ; that it should be attended and followed with a glorious resurrection, with eternal rest and glory of his humanity, with the exaltation of his name, with a supreme dominion over all the world, and that his Father should make him king of Kings, and Prince of the catholic church. These, or whatsoever other comforts the angel ministered, were such considerations which the holy Jesus knew, and the angel knew not but by communication from that God to whose assumed humanity the angel spake ; yet he was pleased to receive comfort from his servant, just as God receives glory from his creatures, and as he rejoices in his own works, even because he is good and gracious, and is pleased to do ; and because himself had caused a voluntary sadness to be interposed between the habitual knowledge and the actual consideration of these discourses ; and so we feel a pleasure when a friendly hand lays upon our wound the plaister which ourselves have made, and applies such instruments and considerations of comfort which we have in notion and an ineffective habit, but cannot reduce them to act because no man is so apt to be his own comforter ; which God hath therefore permitted, that our needs should be the occasion of a mutual charity.

6. It was a great season for the angel's coming because it was a great necessity which was incumbent upon our Lord ; for his sadness and his agony was so great, mingled and compounded of sorrow and zeal, fear and desire ; innocent nature and perfect grace, that he sweat drops as great as if the blood had started through little undiscerned fontinels, and outrun the streams and river of his cross. Euthymius and Theophylact say, that the evangelists use this as a tragical expression of the greatest agony, and an unusual sweat, it being usual to call the

tears of the greatest sorrow "tears of blood." But from the beginning of the church it hath been more generally apprehended literally, and that some blood mingled with the serous substance issued from his veins in so great abundance, that it moistened the ground, and bedecked his garment, which stood like a new firmament studded with stars, portending an approaching storm. Now "he came from Bozrah with his garments red and bloody." And this agony verified concerning the holy Jesus those words of David, "I am poured out like water, my bones are dispersed, my heart in the midst of my body is like melting wax, saith Justin Martyr. Venerable Bede saith, that the descending of these drops of blood upon the earth, besides the general purpose, had also a particular relation to the present infirmities of the apostles, that our blessed Lord obtained of his Father, by the merits of those holy drops, mercies and special support for them ; and that effusion redeemed *them* from the present participation of death. And St. Austin meditates, that the body of our Lord, all overspread with drops of bloody sweat did prefigure the future state of martyrs, and that his body mystical should be clad in a red garment, variegated with the symbols of labour and passion, sweat and blood ; by which himself was pleased to purify his church, and present her to God holy and spotless. What collateral designs and tacit significations might be designed by this mysterious sweat, I know not ; certainly it was a sad beginning of a most dolorous passion ; and such griefs, which have so violent, permanent and sudden effects upon the body, which is not of a nature symbolical to interior and immaterial causes, are proclaimed by such marks to be high and violent. We have read of some persons, that the grief and fear of one night hath put a cover of *snow* upon their heads, as if the labours of thirty years had been extracted, and the quintessence drunk off in the passion of that

night: but if nature had been capable of a greater or more prodigious impress of passion, than a bloody sweat, it must needs have happened in this agony of the holy Jesus, in which he undertook a grief great enough to make up the imperfect contrition of all the saints, and to satisfy for the impenitences of all the world.

7. By this time the traitor Judas was arrived at Gethsemane, and being in the vicinage of the garden, Jesus rises from his prayers, and first calls his disciples from their sleep, and by an irony seems to give them leave to sleep on, but reproves their drowsiness, when danger is so near, and bids them "henceforth take their rest;" meaning, if they *could*, for danger, which now was indeed come to the garden-doors. But the holy Jesus, that it might appear he undertook the passion with choice and a free election, not only refused to flee, but called his apostles to rise, that they might meet his murderers, who came to him "with swords and staves," as if they were to surprise a prince of armed outlaws, whom without force they could not reduce. So also might butchers do well to go armed, when they are pleased to be afraid of lambs, by calling them lions. Judas only discovered his master's retirements, and betrayed him to the opportunities of an armed band; for he could not accuse his master of any word or private action, that might render him obnoxious to suspicion or the law. For such are the rewards of innocence and prudence, that the one secures against sin, the other against suspicion and appearances.

8. The holy Jesus had accustomed to receive all his disciples after absence with entertainment of a kiss, which was the endearment of persons, and the expression of the oriental civility: and Judas was confident that his Lord would not reject him, whose feet he had washed at the time, when he foretold this event, and therefore had agreed to signify him by this sign; and did so, beginning war with a kiss, and breaking the peace

of his Lord by the symbol of kindness: which because Jesus entertained with much evenness and charitable expressions, calling him "friend," he gave evidence, that if he retained civilities to his greatest enemies in the very acts of hostility, he hath banquets and crowns and sceptres for his friends that adore him with the kisses of charity, and love him with the sincerity of an affectionate spirit. But our blessed Lord, besides his essential sweetness and serenity of spirit, understood well how great benefits himself and all the world were to receive by occasion of that act of Judas: and our greatest enemy does by accident to holy persons the offices of their dearest friends; telling us our faults without a cloak to cover their deformities, but out of malice laying open the circumstances of aggravation, doing us affronts, from whence we have an instrument of our patience, and restraining us from scandalous crimes, lest we become a scorn and reproof to them that hate us." And it is none of God's least mercies, that he permits enmities amongst men, that animosities and peevishness may reprove more sharply, and correct with more severity and simplicity, than the gentle hand of friends, who are apter to bind our wounds up, than to discover them and make them smart; but they are to us an excellent probation how friends may best do the offices of friends, if they would take the plainness of enemies in accusing, and still mingle it with the tenderness and good affection of friends. But our blessed Lord called Judas friend, as being the instrument of bringing him to glory, and all the world to pardon, if they would.

9. Jesus himself begins the inquiry, and leads them into their errand, and tells them he was Jesus of Nazareth whom they sought. But this also, which was an answer so gentle, had in it a strength greater than the eastern wind or the voice of thunder; for God was in

that still voice, and it struck them down to the ground. And yet they, (and so do we) still persist to persecute our Lord, and to provoke the eternal God, who can with the breath of his mouth, with a word, or a sign, or a thought, reduce us into nothing, or into a worse condition, even an eternal duration of torments, and cohabitation with a never-ending misery. And if we cannot bear a soft answer of the merciful God, how shall we dare to provoke the wrath of the Almighty judge? But in this instance there was a rare mixture of effects, as there was in Christ of natures; the voice of a man, and the power of God. For it is observed by the doctors of the primitive ages, that from the nativity of our Lord to the day of death, the divinity and humanity did so communicate in effects, that no great action passed, but it was like the sun shining through a cloud, or a beauty with a thin veil drawn over it, they gave illustration and testimony to each other. The holy Jesus was born a tender and a crying infant; but is adored by the magi as a king, by the angels as their God. He is circumcised as a man; but a name is given him to signify him to be the Saviour of the world. He flies into Egypt like a distressed child under the conduct of his helpless parents; but as soon as he enters the country, the idols fall down and confess his true divinity. He is presented in the temple as the Son of man; but by Simeon and Anna he is celebrated with divine praises for the Messiah, the Son of God. He is baptized in Jordan as a sinner; but by the Holy Ghost descending upon him proclaimed him to be the well-beloved of God. He is hungry in the desert as a man; but sustained his body without meat and drink for forty days together by the power of his divinity: there he is tempted of Satan as a weak man, and the angels of light minister unto him as their supreme Lord. And now a little before his death, when he was to take upon him all the affronts, miseries and

exinanitions of the most miserable, he receives testimonies from above, which are most wonderful: for he was transfigured upon mount Tabor, entered triumphantly into Jerusalem, had the acclamations of the people: when he was dying, he darkened the sun; when he was dead, he opened the sepulchres; when he was fast nailed to the cross, he made the earth to tremble: now when he suffered himself to be apprehended by a guard of soldiers, he strikes them all to the ground only by replying to their answer, that the words of the prophet might be verified, "therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day, that I am he that doth speak, behold it is I." Isaiah lii. 6.

10. The soldiers and servants of the Jews having recovered from their fall, and risen by the permission of Jesus, still persisted in their inquiry after him, who was present, ready, and desirous to be sacrificed. He therefore permitted himself to be taken, but not his disciples: for he it was that set them their bounds; and he secured his apostles to be witnesses of his suffering and his glories: and this work was the redemption of the world, in which no man could have an active share, he alone was to tread the wine-press: and time enough they should be called to a fellowship of sufferings. But Jesus went to them, and they bound him with cords: and so began our liberty and redemption from slavery, and sin, and cursings, and death. But he was bound faster by bands of his own; his Father's will, and mercy, pity for the world, prophecies, and mysteries, and love held him fast: and these cords were as "strong as death:" and the cords which the soldiers' malice put upon his holy hands were but symbols and figures, his own compassion and affection were the moral. But yet he undertook this short restraint and condition of a prisoner, that all sorts of persecution and exterior calamities might be hallowed by his sus-

ception, and that these pungent sorrows should like bees sting him, and leave their sting behind, that all the sweetness should remain for us. Some melancholic devotions have, from uncertain stories, added sad circumstances of the first violence done to our Lord: that they bound him with three cords, and that with so much violence, that they caused blood to start from his tender hands; that they spat then also upon him with a violence and incivility like that which their fathers had used towards Hur the brother of Aaron, whom they choked with impure spittings into his throat, because he refused to consent to the making a golden calf. These particulars are not transmitted by certain records. Certain it is, they wanted no malice, and now no power; for the Lord had given himself into their hands.

11. St. Peter seeing his Master thus ill used asked, "Master, shall we strike with the sword?" and before he had his answer, cut off the ear of Malchus. Two swords there were in Christ's family, and St. Peter bore one; either because he was to kill the paschal lamb, or, according to the custom of the country, to secure them against beasts of prey, which in that region were frequent, and dangerous in the night. But now he used it in an unlawful war; he had no competent authority, it was against the ministers of his lawful prince, and against our prince we must not draw a sword for Christ himself, *Himself* having forbidden us; as his "kingdom is not of this world," so neither were his defences secular: he could have called for many legions of angels for his guard, if he had so pleased; and we read that one angel slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand armed men in one night; and therefore it was a vast power which which was at the command of our Lord; and he needs not such low auxiliaries as an army of rebels or a navy of pirates, to defend his cause: he first lays the foundation of our happiness in his sufferings, and hath ever since supported

religion by patience and suffering, and in poverty, and all the circumstances and conjunctures of improbable causes. Fighting for religion is certain to destroy charity, but not certain to support faith. St. Peter therefore may use his *keys*, but he is commanded to put up his sword; and he did so; and presently he and all his fellows fairly ran away: and yet that course was much the more Christian, for though it had in it much infirmity, yet it had no malice. In the mean time the Lord was pleased to touch the ear of Malchus, and he cured it; adding to the first instance of power, in throwing them to the ground, an act of miraculous mercy, curing the wounds of an enemy made by a friend. But neither did this pierce their callous and obdurate spirits; but they led him in uncouth ways, and through the brook Cedron, in which it is said the ruder soldiers plunged him, and passed upon him all the affronts and rudenesses which an insolent and cruel multitude could think of, to signify their contempt and their rage. And such is the nature of evil men, who, when they are not softened by the instruments and arguments of grace, are much hardened by them; such being the purpose of God, that either grace shall cure sin, or accidentally increase it; that it shall either pardon it, or bring it to greater punishment: for so I have seen healthful medicines, abused by the incapacities of a healthless body, become fuel to a fever, and increase the distemperature from indisposition to a sharp disease, and from thence to the margin of the grave. But it was otherwise in Saul, whom Jesus threw to the ground with a more angry sound than these persecutors: but Saul rose a saint, and they persisted devils, and the grace of God distinguished the event.

THE PRAYER.

1. O holy Jesus, make me by thy example to conform to the will of that eternal God who is our Father, merciful and gracious, that I may choose all those accidents which his providence hath actually disposed to me, that I may know no desires but his commands, and his will, and that in all afflictions I may fly thither for mercy, pardon, and support, and may wait for deliverance in such times and manners which the Father hath reserved in his own power, and graciously dispenses according to his infinite wisdom and compassion. Holy Jesus, give me the gift and spirit of prayer, and do thou by thy gracious intercession supply my ignorances and passionate desires and imperfect choices, procuring and giving to me such returns of favour which may support my needs, and serve the ends of religion and the spirit, which thy wisdom chooses, and thy passion hath purchased, and thy grace loves to bestow upon all thy saints and servants. Amen.

2. Eternal God, sweetest Jesu, who didst receive Judas with the affection of a Saviour, and sufferedst him to kiss thy cheek, with the serenity and tranquillity of God, and didst permit thy soldiers to bind thee, with patience exemplary to all ages of martyrs, and didst cure the wound of thy enemy with the charity of a parent, and the tenderness of an infinite pity; O kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth, embrace me with the entertainment of a gracious Lord, and let my soul dwell and feast in thee, who art the repository of eternal sweetness and refreshments. Bind me, O Lord, with those hands which tied thee fast, the chains of love; that such holy union may dissolve the cords of vanity, and confine the bold pretensions of usurping passions, and imprison all extravagances of an impertinent spirit, and lead sin captive to the dominion of grace and sanctified reason; that I also may imitate all the parts of

thy holy passion, and may by thy hands get my liberty, by thy kiss enkindle charity, by the touch of thy hand and the breath of thy mouth have all my wounds cured and restored to the integrity of a holy penitent, and the purities of innocence, that I may love thee, and please thee, and live with thee for ever, O holy and sweetest Jesus. Amen.

Considerations upon the Scourging and other Accidents happening from the Apprehension till the Crucifixion of Jesus.

1. The house of Annas stood in the Mount Sion, and in the way to the house of Caiaphas: and thither Jesus was led as to the first stage of their triumph for their surprise of a person so feared and desired; and there a naughty person smote the holy Jesus upon the face, for saying to Annas that he had made his doctrine public, and that all the people were able to give account of it: to whom the Lamb of God shewed as much meekness and patience in his answer, as in his answer to Annas he had shewed prudence and modesty. For now that they had taken Jesus, they wanted a crime to object against him, and therefore were desirous to snatch occasion from his discourses, to which they resolved to tempt him by questions and affronts: but his answer was general and indefinite, safe and true, enough to acquit his doctrine from suspicion of secret designs, and yet to secure it against their present snares; for now himself, who always had the "innocence of doves," was to join with it the prudence and wariness of serpents; not to prevent death, (for that he was resolved to suffer) but that they might be destitute of all appearance of a just cause on his part. Here it was that Judas received his money: and here that holy face, which was designed to be that object in the beholding of which much of the celestial glory doth consist; that face which the

angels gaze upon with wonder, like infants at a bright sunbeam, was smitten extrajudicially by an incompetent person, with circumstances of despite, in the presence of a judge, in a full assembly, and none reprov'd the insolency and the cruelty of the affront: for they resolved to use him as they use wolves and tigers, with all things that may be destructive, violent and impious: and in this the injury was heightened, because the blow was said to be given by Malchus, an Idumæan slave, and therefore a contemptible person; but far more unworthy by his ingratitude, for so he repaid the holy Jesus for working a miracle and healing his ear. But so the Scripture was fulfilled; "he shall give his body to the smiters, and his cheeks to the nippers," saith the prophet Isaiah; and "they shall smite the cheek of the judge of Israel," saith Micah. And this very circumstance of the passion, Lactantius affirms to have been foretold by the Erythræan sibyl. But no meekness or indifferency could engage our Lord not to protest his innocency: and though following his steps we must walk in the regions of patience, and tranquillity, and admirable toleration of injuries: yet we may represent such defences of ourselves, which by not resisting the sentence may testify that our suffering is undeserved: and if our innocency will not preserve our lives, it will advance our title to a better; and every good cause ill judged shall be brought to another tribunal to receive a just and unerring sentence.

2. Annas having suffered this unworthy usage towards a person so excellent, sent him away to Caiaphas, who had formerly in a full council resolved he should die; yet now palliating the design with the scheme of a tribunal, they seek out for witnesses, and those witnesses are to seek for allegations; and when they find them, they are to seek for proof, and those proofs were to seek for unity and consent, and nothing was ready for their purposes; but they were

forced to use the semblance of a judicial process. that, because they were to make use of Pilate's authority to put him to death, they might persuade Pilate to accept of their examination and conviction without farther inquiry. But such had been the excellency and exemplar piety and prudence of the life of Jesus, that if they pretended against him questions of their law, they were not capital in a Roman court: if they affirmed that he had moved the people to sedition and affected the kingdom, they saw that all the world would convince them of false testimony. At last, after many attempts, they accused him for a figurative speech, a trope which they could not understand; which if it had been spoken in a literal sense, and had been acted to according to the letter, had been so far from a fault, that it would have been a prodigy of power; and it had been easier to raise the temple of Jerusalem, than to raise the temple of his body. In the mean time, the Lamb of God left his cause to defend itself under the protection of his heavenly Father: not only because himself was determined to die, but because if he had not, those premises could never have inferred it. But this silence of the holy Jesus fulfilled a prophesy, it made his enemies full of murmur and amazement, it made them to see that he despised the accusations as certain and apparent calumnies; but that himself was fearless of the issue, and in the sense of morality and mysteries taught us not to be too apt to excuse ourselves, when the semblance of a fault lies upon us, unless by some other duty we are obliged to our defences, since he who was most innocent, was most silent: and it was expedient, that as the first Adam increased his sin by a vain apology, the silence and sufferance of the second Adam should expiate and reconcile it.

3. But Caiaphas had a reserve, which he knew should do the business in that assembly: he adjured him by God to tell him if he "were the Christ." The holy Jesus, being adjured by

so sacred a name, would not now refuse an answer, lest it might not consist with that honour which is due to it, and which he always paid, and that he might neither dispise the authority of the high priest, nor upon so solemn occasion be wanting to that great truth which he came down to earth to persuade to the world. And when three such circumstances concur, it is enough to open our mouths, though we let in death. And so did our Lord confessed himself to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God." And this the high priest was pleased, as the design was laid, to call blasphemy; and there they voted him to die. Then it was "the high priest rent his clothes;" the veil of the temple was rent when the passion was finished, the clothes of the priests at the beginning of it; and as that signified the departing of the synagogue, and laying religion open; so did the rending the garments of Caiaphas prophetically signify that the priest should be rent from him, and from the nation. And thus the personated and theatrical admiration at Jesus became the type of his own punishment, and consigned the nation to deletion: and usually God so dispenses his judgments, that when men personate the tragedies of others, they really act their own.

4. Whilst these things were acting concerning the Lord, a sad accident happened to his servant Peter: for being engaged in strange and evil company in the midst of danger, surprised with a question without time to deliberate an answer, to find subterfuges, or to fortify himself, he denied his Lord shamefully, with some boldness at first, and this grew to a licentious confidence, and then to impudence, and denying with perjury, that he knew not his Lord, who yet was known to him as his own heart and was dearer than his eyes, and for whom he professed but a little before he would die; but did not do so till many years after. But thus he became

to us a sad example of human infirmity; and if the prince of the apostles fell so foully, it is full of pity, but not to be upbraided, if we see the fall of lesser stars. And yet that we may prevent so great a ruin, we must not mingle with such company who will provoke or scorn us into sin; and if we do, yet we must stand upon our guard that a sudden motion do not surprise us: or if we be arrested, yet let us not enter farther into our sin, like wild beasts involving themselves by their impatience. For there are some who, being ashamed and impatient to have been engaged, take sanctuary in boldness and a shameless abetting it, so running into the darkness of hell to hide their nakedness. But he also by returning, and rising instantly, became to us a rare example of penitence; and his not lying long in the crime did facilitate this restitution. For the Spirit of God being extinguished by our works of darkness, is like a taper, which if, as soon as the flame is blown out, it be brought to the fire, it *sucks* light, and without trouble is re-enchanted; but if it cools into death and stillness, it requires a longer stay and trouble. The holy Jesus in the midst of his own sufferings forgot not his servant's danger, but was pleased to look upon him when the cock crew; and the cock was the preacher, and the look of Jesus was the grace that made the sermon effectual: and because he was but newly fallen, and his habitual love of his Master, though interrupted, yet had suffered no natural abatement; he returned with the swiftness of an eagle to the embraces and primitive affections of his Lord.

5. By this time suppose sentence given, Caiaphas prejudging all the Sanhedrim; for he first declared Jesus to have spoken blasphemy, and the fact to be notorious, and then asked their votes; which whoso then should have denied, must have contested the judgment of the high priest, who by the favour of the Romans

was advanced, (Valerius Gratus, who was president of Judæa, having been his patron) and his faction potent, and his malice great, and his heart set upon this business: all which inconveniences none of them durst have suffered, unless he had had a confidence greater than of an apostle at that time. But this sentence was but like strong dispositions to an enraged fever; he was only declared apt and worthy for death, they had no power at that time to inflict it; but yet they let loose all the fury of madmen and insolency of wounded smarting soldiers: and although from the time of his being in the house of Annas till the council met they had used him with studied indignities, yet now they renewed and doubled the unmercifulness, and their injustice, to so great a height, that their injuries must needs have been greater than his patience, if his patience had been less than infinite. For thus man's redemption grows up as the load swells which the holy Jesus bare for us; for these were our portion, and we, having turned the flowers of paradise into thistles, should for ever have felt their infelicity, had not Jesus paid the debt. But he bearing them upon his tender body with an even, and excellent, and dispassionate spirit, offered up these beginnings of sufferings to his Father, to obtain pardon even for them that injured him, and for all the world.

6. Judas now seeing that this matter went farther than he intended it, repented of his fact. For although evil persons are in the progress of their iniquity invited on by new arguments, and supported by confidence and a careless spirit: yet when iniquity is come to the height, or so great a proportion that it is apt to produce despair or an intolerable condition, then the devil suffers the conscience to thaw and grow tender; but it is the tenderness of a bile, it is *soreness* rather and a new disease; and either it comes when the time of repentance is past or leads to some act which shall make the pardon to be impossible: and so it happened

here. For Judas, either impatient of the shame, or of the sting, was thrust on to despair of pardon, with a violence as hasty and as great as were his needs. And despair is very often used like the bolts and bars of hell gates, it seizes upon them that had entered into the suburbs of eternal death by an habitual sin, and it secures them against all retreat. And the devil is forward enough to bring a man to repentance, provided it be too *late*; and Esau wept bitterly and repented him, and the five foolish Virgins lift up their voice aloud when the gates were shut, and in hell men shall repent to all eternity. But I consider the very great folly and infelicity of Judas: it was at midnight he received his money in the house of Annas; betimes in that morning he repented his bargain; he threw the money back again, but his sin stuck close, and it is thought to a sad eternity. Such is the purchase of treason and the reward of covetousness; it is cheap in its offers, momentary in its possession, unsatisfying in the fruition, uncertain in the stay, sudden in its departure, horrid in the remembrance, and a ruin, a certain and miserable ruin is in the event. When Judas came in that sad condition, and told his miserable story to them that set him on work, they let him go away unpitied; he had served their ends in betraying his Lord, and those that hire such servants use to leave them in the disaster, to shame and to sorrow: and so did the priests, but took the money, and refused to put it into the treasury, because it was "the price of blood;" but they made no scruple to take it from the treasury to buy that blood. Any thing seems lawful that serves the ends of ambitious and bloody persons, and then they are scrupulous in their cases of conscience when nothing of interest intervenes: for evil men make religion the servant of interest; and sometimes weak men think that it is the fault of the religion, and suspect that all of it is a design, because many great politicians make it

so. The end of the tragedy was, that Judas died with an ignoble death, marked with the circumstances of a horrid judgment, and perished by the most infamous hands in the world, that is, by his own. Which if it be confronted against the excellent spirit of St. Peter, who did an act as contradictory to his honour and the grace of God as could be easily imagined; yet taking sanctuary in the arms of his Lord, he lodged in his heart for ever, and became an example to all the world of the excellency of the divine mercy, and the efficacy of a holy hope, and a hearty, timely, and an operative repentance.

7. But now all things were ready for the purpose, the high priest and all his council go along with the holy Jesus to the house of Pilate, hoping he would verify their sentence, and bring it to execution, that they might once be rid of their fears, and enjoy their sin and their reputation quietly. St. Basil affirms, that the high priest called the holy Jesus to be led with a cord about his neck, and, in memory of that, the priests for many ages wore a *stole* about theirs. But the Jews did it according to the custom of the nation, to signify he was condemned to death: they desired Pilate that he would crucify him, they having found him worthy. And when Pilate inquired into the particulars, they gave him a general and indefinite answer; "If he were not guilty, we would not have brought him unto thee:" they intended not to make Pilate judge of the cause, but executor of their cruelty. But Pilate had not learned to be guided by an implicit faith of such persons, whom he knew to be malicious and violent; and therefore still called for instances and arguments of their accusation. And that all the world might see with how great unworthiness they prosecuted the Messiah, they chiefly there accused him of such crimes upon which themselves condemned him not, and they knew to be false, but yet likely to move Pilate, if he had been passionate or in-

considerate in his sentences; "He offered to make himself a king." This discourse happened at the entry of the prætorium; for the Jews, who made no conscience of killing the King of heaven, made a conscience of the external customs and ceremonies of their law, which had in them no interior sanctity, which were apt to separate them from the nations, and remark them with characters of religion and abstraction; it would defile them to go to a Roman forum, where a capital action was to be judged; and yet the effusion of the best blood in the world was not esteemed against their religion: so violent and blind is the spirit of malice, which turns humanity into cruelty, wisdom into craft, diligence into subornation, religion into superstition.

8. Two other articles they alleged against him: but the first concerned not Pilate, and the second was involved in the third, and therefore he chose to examine him upon this only of his being a king. To which the holy Jesus answered, that it is true, he was a king indeed, but "not of this world;" his throne is heaven, the angels are his courtiers, and the whole creation are his subjects: his regiment is spiritual, his judicatories are the courts of conscience and church tribunals, and at doomsday the clouds: the tributes which he demands are conformity to his laws, faith, hope, and charity; no other gabels but the duties of a holy spirit, and the expresses of a religious worship, and obedient will, and a consenting understanding. And in all this Pilate thought the interest of Cæsar was not invaded. For certain it is, the discipline of Jesus confirmed it much, and supported it by the strongest pillars. And here Pilate saw how impertinent and malicious their accusation was: and we, who declaim against the unjust proceedings of the Jews towards our dearest Lord, should do well to take care that we, in accusing any of our brethren either with malicious purpose, or with an uncharitable cir-

cumstance, do not commit the same fault which in them we so hate and accuse. Let no man speak any thing of his neighbour but what is true: and yet if a truth be heightened by the biting rhetoric of a satirical spirit, extended and drawn forth in circumstances and arts of aggravation, the truth becomes a load to the guilty person, is a prejudice to the sentence of the judge, and hath not so much as the excuse of zeal, much less the charity of Christianity. Sufficient to every man is the plain story of his crime; and to excuse as much of it as we can would better become us, who perish unless we be excused for infinite irregularities. But if we add this also, that we accuse our brethren before them that may amend them and reform their error, if we pity their persons and do not hate them, if we seek nothing of their disgrace and make not their shame public, but when the public is necessarily concerned or the state of the man's sin requires it, then our accusations are charitable: but if they be not, all such accusations are accepted by Christ with as much displeasure, in proportion to the degree of the malice and the proper effect, as was this accusation of his own person.

9. But Pilate having pronounced Jesus innocent, and perceiving he was a Galilean, sent him to Herod, as being a more competent person to determine concerning one of his own jurisdiction. Herod was glad at the honour done to him, and the person brought him, being now desirous to see some miracle done before him. But the holy Jesus spake not one word there, nor did any sign; so to reprove the sottish carelessness of Herod, who, living in the place of Jesus' abode, never had seen his person or heard his sermons. And if we neglect the opportunities of grace, and refuse to hear the voice of Christ in the time of mercy and divine appointment, we may arrive at that state of misery in which Christ will refuse to speak one word of comfort to us: and the homilies of the

gospel shall be dead letters, and the spirit not at all refreshed, nor the understanding instructed, nor the affections moved, nor the will determined; but because we have during all our time stopt our ears, in his time God will stop his mouth, and shut up the springs of grace, that we shall receive no refreshment, or instruction, or pardon, or felicity. Jesus suffered not himself to be moved at the pertinacious accusations of the Jews, nor the desires of the tyrant, but persevered in silence, till Herod and his servants despised him and dismissed him. For so it became our high priest, who was to sanctify all our sufferings, to consecrate affronts and scorn, that we may learn to endure contempt, and to suffer ourselves in a religious cause to be despised; and when it happens in any other, to remember that we have our dearest Lord for a precedent of bearing it with admirable simplicity and equanimity of deportment: and it is a mighty stock of self-love that dwells in our spirits, which makes us of all afflictions most impatient of this. But Jesus endured this despite, and suffered this to be added, that he was exposed in scorn to the boys of the streets. For Herod caused him to be arrayed in white, sent him out to be scorned by the people and hooted at by idle persons, and so remitted him to Pilate. And since that accident to our Lord, the church hath not undecently chosen to clothe her priests with albe or white garments; and it is a symbolical intimation and representment of that part of the passion and affront which Herod passed upon the holy Jesus: and this is so far from deserving a reproof, that it were to be wished all the children of the church would imitate all those graces which Christ exercised when he wore that garment, which she hath taken up in ceremony and thankful memory; that is, in all their actions and sufferings be so estranged from secular arts and mixtures of the world, so intent upon religion, and active in all its interests, so recon-

ciled to all acts of providence, so equal in all chances, so patient of every accident, so charitable to enemies, and so undetermined by exterior events, that nothing may draw us forth from the severities of our religion, or entice us from the retirements of a recollected and sober and patient spirit, or make us to depart from the courtesies of piety, though for such adhesion and pursuit we be esteemed fools, or ignorant, or contemptible.

10. When Pilate had received the holy Jesus, and found that Herod had sent him back uncondemned, he attempted to rescue him from their malice, by making him a donative and a free man at the petition of the people. But they preferred a murderer and a rebel, Barabbas, before him; for themselves being rebels against the King of heaven, loved to acquit persons criminal in the same kind of sin, rather than their Lord, against whom they took up all the arms which they could receive from violence and perfect malice, "desiring to have him crucified who raised the dead, and to have the other released who destroyed the living." And when Pilate saw they were set upon it, he consented, and delivered him first to be scourged; which the soldiers executed with violence and unrelenting hands, opening his virginal body to nakedness, and tearing his tender flesh till the pavement was purpled with a shower of holy blood. It is reported in the ecclesiastical story, that when St. Agnes and St. Barbara, holy virgins and martyrs, were stripped naked to execution, God, pitying their great shame and trouble to have their nakedness discovered, made for them a veil of light, and sent them to a modest and desired death. But the holy Jesus, who chose all sorts of shame and confusion, that by a fulness of suffering he might expiate his Father's anger, and that he might consecrate to our sufferance all kind of affront and passion, endured even the shame of nakedness, at the time of his scourging, suffering

himself to be divested of his robes, that we might be clothed with that stole he put off: for therefore he took on him the state of sinning Adam, and became naked, that we might first be clothed with righteousness, and then with immortality.

11. After they had scourged him without remorse, they "clothed him with purple, and crowned him with thorns, and put a cane in his hand for a sceptre, and bowed their knees before him, and saluted him with mockery, with a 'Hail king of the Jews,' and they beat him and spat upon him;" and then Pilate brought him forth, and showed this sad spectacle to the people, hoping this might move them to compassion, who never loved to see a man prosperous, and are always troubled to see the same man in misery. But the earth, which was cursed for Adam's sake, and was sowed with thorns and thistles, produced the full harvest of them; and the second Adam gathered them all, and made garlands of them as ensigns of his victory which he was now in pursuit of against sin, the grave, and hell. And we also may make our thorns, which are in themselves pungent and dolorous, to be a crown, if we bear them patiently, and unite them to Christ's passion, and offer them to his honour, and bear them in his cause, and rejoice in them for his sake. And indeed, after such a grove of thorns growing upon the head of our Lord, to see one of Christ's members soft, delicate, and effeminate, is an indecency, next to this of seeing the Jews use the King of glory with the greatest reproach and infamy.

12. But nothing prevailing, nor the innocence of Jesus, nor his immunity from the sentence of Herod, nor the industry and diligence of Pilate, nor the misery nor the sight of the afflicted love of God, at last (for so God decreed to permit it, and Christ to suffer it) Pilate gave sentence of death upon him, having first washed his hands; of which God served

his end, to declare the innocence of his Son, of which in this whole process he was most careful, and suffered not the least probability to adhere to him; yet Pilate served no end of his, nor preserved any thing of his innocence. He that rails upon a prince, and cries, "Saving your honour, you are a tyrant;" and he that strikes a man upon the face, and cries him mercy, and undoes him, and says it was in jest, does just like that person that sins against God, and thinks to be excused by saying it was against his conscience; that is washing our hands when they are stained in blood, as if a ceremony of purification were enough to cleanse a soul from the stains of a spiritual impurity. So some refuse not to take any oath in times of persecution, and say it obliges not, because it was *forced*, and done against their wills; as if the doing of it were washed off by protesting against it, whereas the protesting against it declares me criminal, if I rather choose not death than that which I profess to be a sin. But all the persons which co-operated in this death were in this life consigned to a fearful judgment after it. The Jews took the blood (which Pilate seemed to wash off) "upon themselves and their children," and the blood of this paschal lamb stuck upon their forehead and marked them, not to *escape*, but to fall under the sword of the destroying angel, and they perished either by a more hasty death, or shortly after in the extirpation and miserable ruin of their nation. And Pilate, who had a less share in the crime, yet had a black character of a secular judgment; for not long after he was by Vitellius the president of Syria sent to Rome to answer for the crimes objected against him by the Jews, whom to please he had done so much violence to his conscience; and by Cæsar's sentence he was banished to Vienna, deprived of all his honours, where he lived ingloriously, till by impatience of his calamity he killed himself with his own hand. And thus the blood

of Jesus shed for the salvation of the world became to them a curse, and that which purifies the saints stuck to them that shed it, and who mingled it not with the tears of repentance, to be a leprosy loathsome and incurable. So manna turns to worms, and the wine of angels to vinegar and lees, when it is received into impure vessels, or tasted by wanton palates; and the sun himself produces rats and serpents, when it reflects upon the dirt of Nilus.

THE PRAYER.

O holy and immaculate Lamb of God, who wert pleased to suffer shame and sorrow, to be brought before tribunals, to be accused maliciously, betrayed treacherously, condemned unjustly, scourged most rudely, suffering the most severe and most unhandsome inflictions which could be procured by potent, subtle, and extremest malice, and didst choose this out of love greater than the love of mothers, more affectionate than the tears of joy and pity dropped from the eyes of most passionate women, by these fontinels of blood issuing forth life, and health, and pardon upon all thine enemies; teach me to apprehend the baseness of sin, in proportion to the greatest of those calamities which my sin made it necessary for thee to suffer, that I may hate the cause of thy sufferings, and adore thy mercy, and imitate thy charity, and copy out thy patience and humility, and love thy person to the uttermost extent and degrees of my affections. Lord, what am I, that the eternal Son of God should suffer one stripe for me? but thy love is infinite: and how great a misery is it to provoke by sin so great a mercy, and despise so miraculous a goodness, and to do fresh despite to the Son of God? but our sins are innumerable, and our

infirmities are mighty. Dearest Jesu, pity me, for I am accused by my own conscience, and am found guilty; I am stripped naked of my innocence, and bound fast by lust, and tormented with stripes and wounds of enraged appetites. But let thy innocence excuse me, the robes of thy righteousness clothe me, thy bondage set me free, and thy stripes heal me; that thou being my advocate, my physician, my patron, and my Lord, I may be adopted into the union of thy merits, and partake of the efficacy of thy sufferings, and be crowned as thou art, having my sins changed to virtues, and my thorns to rays of glory under thee our head, in the participations of eternity, O holy and immaculate lamb of God. Amen.

DISCOURSE XX.

Of Death, and the due manner of Preparation to it.

1. The Holy Spirit of God hath in scripture revealed to us but one way of preparing to death, and that is, by a holy life; and there is nothing in all the book of life concerning this exercise of address, to death, but such advices as suppose the dying person in a state of grace. St. James indeed counsels, that in sickness we should send for the ministers ecclesiastical, and that "they pray over us, and that we confess our sins, and they shall be forgiven;" that is, those prayers are of great efficacy for the removing the sickness, and taking off that punishment of sin, and healing them in a certain degree, according to the efficacy of the ministry, and the dispositions or capacities of the sick person. But we must know that oftentimes universal effects are attributed to partial causes; because by the analogy of scripture we are taught, that all the body of holy actions and ministeries are to unite in production of the

event, and that without that adunation one thing alone cannot operate; but because no one alone does the work, but by an united power, therefore indefinitely the effect is ascribed sometimes to one, sometimes to another, meaning, that one as much as the other, that is, all together, are to work the pardon and the grace. But the doctrine of preparation to death we are clearest taught in the parable of the ten virgins. Those who were wise stood waiting for the coming of the bridegroom, their lamps burning; only when the Lord was at hand, at the notice of his coming published, they trimmed their lamps, and they so disposed, went forth and met him, and entered with him into his interior and eternal joys. They whose lamps did not stand ready beforehand, expecting the uncertain hour, were shut forth, and bound in darkness. "Watch therefore, so our Lord applies and expounds the parable, for ye know not the day nor the hour of the coming of the son of man." Whenever the arrest of death seizes us, unless before that notice we had oil in our vessels, that is, grace in our hearts, habitual grace, (for nothing else can reside or dwell there, an act cannot *inhabit* or be in a vessel) it is too late to make preparation. But they who have it, may and must prepare, that is, they must stir the fire, trim the vessel, make it more actual in its exercise and productions, full of ornament, advantages and degrees. And that is all we know from scripture concerning preparation.

2. And indeed since all our life we are dying, and this minute in which I now write death divides with me, and hath got the surer part and more certain possession, it is but reasonable that we should always be doing the offices of preparation. If to day we were not dying and passing on to our grave, then we might with more safety defer our work till the morrow: but as fuel in a furnace in every degree of its heat and reception of the flame is converting into fire and ashes, and the disposing it to the last

mutation is the same work with the last instance of its change : so is the age of every day a beginning of death, and the night composing us to sleep bids us go to our lesser rest ; because that night, which is the end of the preceding day, is but a lesser death ; and whereas now we have died so many days, the last day of our life is but the dying so many more, and when that last day of dying will come we know not. There is nothing then added but the circumstance of sickness, which also happens many times before ; only men are pleased to call that death which is the end of dying, when we cease to die any more : and therefore to put off our preparation till that which we call death, is to put off the work of all our life, till the time comes in which it is to cease and determine.

3. But to accelerate our early endeavour, (besides what hath been formerly considered upon the proper grounds of repentance) I here reinforce the consideration of death in such circumstances which are apt to engage us upon an early industry. First, I consider, that no man is sure that he shall not die suddenly ; and therefore if heaven be worth securing, it were fit that we should reckon every day the vespers of death, and therefore that according to the usual rites of religion it be begun and spent with religious offices : and let us consider, that those many persons who are remarked in history to have died suddenly, either were happy by an early piety, or miserable by a sudden death. And if uncertainty of condition be an abatement of felicity, and spoils the good we possess, no man can be happy but he that hath lived well, that is, who hath secured his condition by an habitual and living piety. For since God hath not told us we shall not die suddenly, is it not certain he intended we should prepare for sudden death, as well as against death clothed in any other circumstances ? Fabius surnamed Pictor was choked with a hair in a mess of milk, Anacreon with a

raisin, Cardinal Colonna with figs crusted with ice, Adrian the fourth with a fly, Drusius Pompeius with a pear, Domitius Afer, Quintilian's tutor, with a full cup, Casimere the second king of Polonia, with a little draught of wine, Amurath with a full goblet, Tarquinius Priscus with a fish-bone. For as soon as a man is born, that which in nature only remains to him is to die ; and if we differ in the way or time of our abode, or the manner of our exit, yet we are equal at last : and since it is not determined by a natural cause which way we shall go, or at what age, a wise man will suppose himself always upon his death-bed ; and such supposition is like making of his will, he is not the nearer death for doing it, but he is the readier for it when it comes.

4. St. Jerome said well, " He deserves not the name of a Christian, who will live in that state of life in which he will not die." And indeed it is a great venture to be in an evil state of life, because every minute of it hath a danger ; and therefore a succession of actions, in every one of which he may as well perish as escape, is a boldness that hath no mixture of wisdom or probable venture. How many persons have died in the midst of an act of sport, or at a merry meeting ? Grimoaldus, a Lombard king died with shooting of a pigeon ; Thales, the Milesian in the theatre : Lucia, the sister of Aurelius the emperor, playing with her little son, was wounded in her breast with a needle, and died : Benno, bishop of Adelberg, with great ceremony and joy consecrating St. Michael's church, was crowded to death by the people : so was the duke of Saxony at the inauguration of Albert I. The great lawyer Baldus, playing with a little dog, was bitten upon the lip, instantly grew mad, and perished : Charles the Eighth of France, seeing certain gentlemen playing at Tennis Court, swooned, and recovered not : Henry II. was killed running at tilt : Ludovicus Borgia with riding the great

horse: and the holy Syracusan Archimedes, was slain by a rude soldier as he was making diagrams in the sand, which was his greatest pleasure. How many men have died laughing, or in the ecstasies of a great joy? Philippides the comedian, and Dionysius the tyrant of Sicily, died with joy at the news of a victory; Diagoras of Rhodes, and Chilo the philosopher, expired in the embraces of their sons crowned with an Olympic laurel: Polycrita Naxia, on being saluted the saviouress of her country; Marcus Juventius, when the senate decreed him honours; the emperor Conrad the Second, when he triumphed after the conquest of Italy: these had a joy bigger than their heart, and their fancy swelled it, till they burst and died. Death can enter in at any door: Philistion of Nice died with excessive laughter; so did the poet Philemon, being provoked to it only by seeing a ass eat figs. And the number of persons who have been found suddenly dead in their beds is so great, that as it engages many to a more certain and regular devotion for their compline, so it were well it were pursued to the utmost intention of God; that is, that all the parts of religion should with zeal and assiduity be entertained and finished, that as it becomes wise men, we never be surprised with that we are sure will sometime or other happen. A great general in Italy at the sudden death of Alfonsus of Ferrara, and Lodovico Corbinelli at the sight of the sad accident upon Henry II., of France now mentioned, turned religious, and they did what God intended in those deaths. It concerns us to be curious of single actions, because even in those shorter periods we may expire and find our graves. But if the state of life be contradictory to our hopes of heaven, it is like affronting a cannon before a beleaguered town a month together; it is a contempt of safety, and a rendering all reason useless and unprofitable: but he only is wise who, having made death familiar to him by expectation and

daily apprehension, does at all instants go forth to meet it. The wise virgins "went forth to meet the bridegroom, for they were ready." Excellent therefore is the council of the son of Sirach; "use physic or ever thou be sick. Before judgment examine thyself, and in the day of visitation thou shalt find mercy. Humble thyself before thou be sick, and in the time of sins shew repentance. Let nothing hinder thee to pay thy vows in due time, and defer not until death to be justified."

5 Secondly, I consider, that it often happens that in those few days of our last visitation, which many men design for their preparation and repentance, God hath expressed by an exterior accident, that those persons have deceived themselves and neglected their own salvation. St. Gregory reports of Chrysaurius, a gentleman in the province of Valeria, rich, vicious and witty, lascivious, covetous and proud, that being cast upon his death-bed he fancied he saw evil spirits coming to arrest him and drag him to hell. He fell into great agony and trouble, shrieked out, called for his son, who was a very religious person, flattered him, as willing to have been rescued by anything: but perceiving his danger increase and grown desperate, he called loud with repeated clamours, "give me but respite till the morrow," and with those words he died, there being "no place left for his repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears and groans." The same was the case of a drunken monk, whom venerable Bede mentions. Upon his death-bed he seemed to see hell opened, and a place assigned him near to Caiaphas and those who crucified our dearest Lord. The religious persons that stood about his bed called on him to repent of his sins, to implore the mercies of God, and to trust in Christ: but he answered with reason enough, "this is no time to change my life, the sentence is passed upon me, and it is too late." And it is very considerable and sad which Petrus

Damianus tells of Gunizo, a factious and ambitious person, to whom, it is said, the tempter gave notice of his approaching death: but when any man preached repentance to him, out of a strange indifference, or the spirit of reprobation, he seemed like a dead and unconcerned person; in all other discourses he was awake and apt to answer. For God had shut up the gates of mercy that no streams should issue forth to quench the flames of hell; or else had shut up the gates of reception and entertainment, that it should not enter: either God denies to give them pardon when they call, or denies to them a power to call: they either cannot pray, or God will not answer. Now since these stories are related by men learned, pious, and eminent in their generations, and because they served no design but the ends of piety, and have in them nothing dissonant from revelation or the frequent events of providence, we may upon their stock consider, that God's judgments and visible marks being set upon a state of life, although they happen but seldom in the instances, yet they are of *universal* purpose and signification. Upon all murderers God hath not thrown a thunder-bolt, nor broke all sacrilegious persons upon the wheel of an inconstant and ebbing estate, nor spoken to every oppressor from heaven in a voice of thunder, nor cut off all rebels in the first attempts of insurrection: but because he hath done so to some, we are to look upon those judgments as divine accents, and voices of God, threatening all the same crimes with the like events, and with the ruins of eternity. For though God does not always make the same prologues to death, yet by these few accidents happening to single persons, we are to understand his purposes concerning all in the same condition; it was not the person so much as the estate which God then marked with so visible characters of his displeasure.

6. And it seems to me a wonder, that since from all the records of Scripture urging the un-

certainty of the day of death, the horror of the day of judgment, the severity of God, the dissolution of the world, the certainty of our account, still from all these premises the Spirit of God makes no other inference, but that we "watch, and stand in a readiness, that we live in all holy conversation and godliness," and that there is no one word concerning any other manner of an essentially necessary preparation, none but this: yet that there are doctrines commenced, and rules prescribed, and offices set down, and suppletories invented by curates of souls how to prepare a vicious person, and upon his death-bed to reconcile him to the hopes and promises of heaven. Concerning which I desire that every person would but inquire, where any one *promise* is recorded in Scripture concerning such addresses, and what articles Christ hath drawn up between his Father and us concerning a preparation begun upon our death-bed: and if he shall find none (as most certainly from Genesis to the Revelation there is not a word concerning it, but very much against it) let him first build his hopes upon this proposition, that "a holy life is the only preparation to a happy death," and then we can without danger proceed to some other considerations.

7. When a good man, or a person concerning whom it is not certain he hath lived in habitual vices, comes to die, there are but two general ways of intercourse with him; the one to keep him from new sins, the other to make some emendations of the old; the one to fortify him against special weaknesses and proper temptations of that estate, and the other to trim his lamp, that by excellent actions he may adorn his spirit, making up the omissions of his life, and supplying the imperfections of his estate, that his soul may return into the hands of its Creator as pure as it can, every degree of perfection being an advantage so great, as that the loss of the least portion of it cannot be recompensed with all the good of this world. Con-

cerning the first ; the temptations proper to this estate are either weakness in faith, despair, or presumption : for whatsoever is besides these, as it is the common infelicity of all the several states of life, so they are oftentimes arguments of an ill condition, of immortification of vicious habits, and that he comes not to this combat well prepared : such are covetousness, unwillingness to make restitution, remanent affection to his former vices, an unresigned spirit, and the like.

8. In the ecclesiastical story we find many dying persons mentioned, who have been very much afflicted with some doubts concerning an article of faith. St. Gregory in an epistle he writ to St. Austin instances in the temptation which Eusebius suffered upon his death-bed. And although sometimes the devil chooses an article that is not proper to that state, knowing that every such doubt is well enough for his purpose, because of the incapacity of the person to suffer long disputes, and of the jealousy and suspicion of a dying and weak man, fearing lest every thing should cozen him ; yet it is commonly instanced in the article of the resurrection, or the state of separation or re-union. And it seems to some persons incredible, that from a bed of sickness, a state of misery, a cloud of ignorance, a load of passions, a man should enter into the condition of a perfect understanding, great joy, and an intellectual life, a conversation with angels, a fruition of God ; the change is greater than his reason ; and his faith being in conclusion tottering like the ark, and ready to fall, seems a pillar as unsafe and unstable to rely on, as a bank of turf in an earthquake. Against this a general remedy is prescribed by spiritual persons ; that the sick man should apprehend all changes of persuasion which happened to him in his sickness, contradictory to those assents which in his clearest use of reason he had, to be temptations and arts of the devil. And he hath reason so to think, when he remembers

how many comforts of the Spirit of God, what joys of religion, what support, what assistances, what strengths he had in the whole course of his former life upon the stock of faith, and interest of the doctrine of Christianity. And since disbelieving the promises evangelical, at that time, can have no end of advantage, and that all wise men tell him it may have an end to make him lose the title to them, and do him infinite disadvantage ; upon the stock of interest and prudence he must reject such fears which cannot help him, but may ruin him. For all the works of grace which he did upon the hopes of God, and the stock of the divine revelations, (if he fails in his hold upon them) are all rendered unprofitable. And it is certain, if there be no such thing as immortality and resurrection, he shall lose nothing for believing there is ; but if there be, they are lost to him for not believing it.

9. But this is also to be cured by proper arguments. And there is no Christian man but hath within him, and carries about him demonstrations of the possibility and great instances of the credibility of those great changes, which these tempted persons have no reason to distrust, but because they think them too great, and too good to be true. And here, not only the consideration of the divine power and eternal goodness is a proper antidote, but also the observation of what we have already received from God. To be raised from nothing to something is a mutation not less than infinite ; and from that which we were in our first conception to pass into so perfect and curious bodies, and to become discursive, sensible, passionate, and reasonable, and next to angels, is a greater change, than from this state to pass into that excellency and perfection of it which we expect as the melioration and improvement of the present : for this is but a mutation of degrees, that of substance : this is more sensible, because we have perception in both states ; that is of greater distance,

because in the first term we were so far distant from what we are, that we could not perceive what then we were, much less desire to be what we now perceive: and yet God did that for us unasked, without any obligation on his part, or merit on ours; much rather then may we be confident of this alteration of accidents and degrees, because God hath obliged himself by promise; he hath disposed us to it by qualities, actions, and habits, which are to the state of glory as infancy is to manhood, as elements are to excellent discourses, as blossoms are to ripe fruits. And he that hath wrought miracles for us, preserved us in dangers, done strange acts of providence, sent his Son to take our nature, made a virgin to bear a son, and God to become man, and two natures to be one individual person, and all in order to this end of which we doubt, hath given us so many arguments of credibility, that if he had done any more, it would not have been left in our choice to believe or not believe: and then much of the excellency of our faith would have been lost. Add to this, that we are not tempted to disbelieve the Roman story or that Virgil's *Æneids* were written by him, or that we ourselves are descended of such parents; because these things are not only transmitted to us by such testimony which we have no reason to distrust, but because the tempter cannot serve any end upon us by producing such doubts in us: and therefore since we have greater testimony for every article of faith, and to believe it is of so much concernment to us, we may well suspect it to be an artifice of the devil to rob us of our reward; this proceeding of his being of the same nature with all his other temptations, which in our lifetime like fiery darts he threw into our face, to despoil us of our glory, and blot out the image of God imprinted on us.

10. Secondly, If the devil tempts the sick person to despair, he who is by God appointed to minister a word of comfort must fortify his

spirit with consideration and representment of the divine goodness, manifest in all the expresses of nature and grace, of providence and revelation; that God never "extinguishes the smoking flax, nor breaks the bruised reed;" that a constant and a hearty endeavour is the sacrifice which God delights in; that in the firmament of heaven there are little stars, and they are *most* in number, and there are but few of the greatest magnitude; that there are children and babes in Christ as well as strong men, and amongst these there are great difference: that the interruptions of the state of grace by intervening crimes, if they were rescinded by repentance, they were great danger in the interval, but served as increment of the divine glory, and arguments of care and diligence to us at the restitution. These and many more are then to be urged when the sick person is in danger of being swallowed up with over-much sorrow; and therefore to be insisted on in all like cases as the physician gives him cordials, that we may do charity to him and minister comfort, not because they are always necessary, even in the midst of great sadnesses and discomforts. For we are to secure his love to God, that he acknowledge the divine mercy, that he believe the article of remission of sins, that he be thankful to God for the blessings which already he hath received, and that he lay all the load of his discomfort upon himself, and his own incapacities of mercy: and then the sadness may be very great, and his tears clamorous, and his heart broken all in pieces, and his humility lower than the earth, and his hope undiscernible; and yet no danger to his final condition. Despair reflects upon God, and dishonours the infinity of his mercy: and if the sick person do but confess that God is not at all wanting in his promises, but ever abounding in his mercies, and that it is want of the condition on his own part that makes the misery, and that if he had done his duty God would save him,

let him be assisted with perpetual prayers, with examples of lapsed and returning sinners, whom the church celebrates for saints, such as Mary Magdalen, Mary of Egypt, Afra, Thasis, Pelagia; let it be often inculcated to him, that as God's mercy is of itself infinite, so its demonstration to us is not determined to any certain period, but hath such latitudes in it and reservations, which as they are apt to restrain too great boldness, so also to become sanctuaries to disconsolate persons; let him be invited to throw himself upon these grounds, that he who is our Judge is also our Advocate and Redeemer, that he knows and pities our infirmities, and that our very hoping in him does indear him, and he will deliver us the rather for our confidence, when it is balanced with reverence and humility; and then all these supernumerary fears are advantageous to more necessary graces, and do more secure his final condition than they can disturb it.

11. When St. Arsenius was near his death, he was observed to be very tremulous, sad, weeping, and disconsolate. The standers by asked the reason of his fears, wondering that he, having lived in great sanctity for many years, should not now rejoice at the going forth of his prison. The good man confessed the fear, and withal said it was no other than he had always borne about with him in the days of his pilgrimage; and what he then thought a duty, they had no reason now to call either a fault or a misery. Great sorrows, fears, and distrustings of a man's own condition, are oftentimes but abatements of confidence, or a remission of joys and gaieties of spirit; they are but like salutary clouds, dark and fruitful: and if the tempted person be strengthened in a love of God, though he got no farther in his hopes than to believe a possibility of being saved, than to say, "God can save him, if he please," and to pray that he will save him, his condition is a state of grace, it is like a root in the ground,

trod upon, humble and safe, not so fine as the state of flowers; yet that which will spring up in as glorious a resurrection as that which looks fairer, and pleases the sense, and is indeed a blessing, but not a duty.

12. But there is a state of death-bed which seems to have in it more question, and to be of nicer consideration, a sick person after a vicious and base life: and if upon whatsoever he can do, you give him hopes of a pardon, where is your promise to warrant it? if you do not give him hopes, do you not drive him to despair, and ascertain his ruin, to verify your proposition? to this I answer, that despair is opposed to hope, and hope relies upon the divine promises: and where there is no promise, there the despair is not a sin, but a mere impossibility. The accursed spirits which are sealed up to the judgment of the last day cannot hope; and he that repents not, cannot hope for pardon. And therefore if all which the state of death-bed can produce be not the duty of repentance, which is required of necessity to pardon, it is not in such a person properly to be called despair, any more than it is blindness in a stone that it cannot see: such a man is not within the capacities of pardon, and therefore all those acts of exterior repentance, and all his sorrow and resolution, and tears of emendation, and other preparatives to interior repentance, are like oil poured into mortal wounds; they are the care of the physician, and these are the cautions of the church, and they are at no hand to be neglected. For if they do not alter the state, they may lessen the judgment, or procure a temporal blessing: and if the person recover, they are excellent beginnings of the state of grace, and if they be pursued in a happy opportunity, will grow up into glory.

13. But if it be demanded, whether in such cases the curate be bound to give absolution; I can give no other answer but this, that if he lie under the censure of the church, the laws of

the church are to determine the particular, and I know no church in the world but uses to absolve death-bed penitents upon the instances of those actions of which their present condition is capable; though in the primitive ages in some cases they denied it. But if the sick person be under no positive censure, and is bound only by the guilt of habitual vice, if he desires the prayers of the church, she is bound in charity to grant them, to pray for pardon to him, and all other graces in order to salvation: and if she absolves the penitent, *towards God it hath no other efficacy but of a solemn prayer*; and therefore it were better that all the charity of the office were done, and the solemnity omitted; because in the earnest prayer she co-operates to his salvation as much as she can, and by omitting the solemnity distinguishes evil lives from holy persons, and walks securely, whilst she refuses to declare him pardoned whom God hath declared not to be so. And possibly that form of absolution which the churches of the west now use, being indicative and declaratory of a present pardon, is for the very form sake not to be used to death-bed penitents after a vicious life; because if any thing more be intended in the form than a prayer, the truth of the affirmation may be questioned, and an ecclesiastical person hath no authority to say to such a man, "I absolve thee:" but if no more be intended but a prayer, it is better to use a mere prayer and common form of address, than such words which may countenance unsecure confidences, evil purposes, and worse lives.

14. Thirdly, If the devil tempts a sick person, who hath lived well, to presumption, and that he seems full of confidence without trouble, the care that is then to be taken is to consider the disease, and to state the question right. For at some instants and periods God visits the spirit of a man, and sends the immision of a bright ray into him; and some good

men have been so used to apprehensions of the divine mercy, that they have an habitual cheerful loss of spirit and hopes of salvation. St. Hierome reports that Hilarion in a death-bed agony felt some tremblings of heart, till reflecting upon his course of life, he found comforts springing from thence by a proper emanation, and departed cheerfully: and Ezekiah represented to God in prayer the integrity of his life, and made it the instrument of his hope. And nothing of this is to be called presumption, provided it be in persons of eminent sanctity and great experience, old disciples, and the more perfect Christians: but because such persons are but seldom and rare, if the same confidence be observed in persons of common imperfection and an ordinary life, it is to be corrected and allayed with considerations of the divine severity and justice, and with the strict requisites of a holy life, with the deceit of a man's own heart, with consideration and general remembrances of secret sins, and that the most perfect state of life hath very great needs of mercy, and "if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" And the spirit of the man is to be promoted and helped in the increase of contrition, as being the proper deletory to cure the extravagances of a forward and intemperate spirit.

15. But there is a presumption commenced upon an opinion, relying either upon a persuasion of single predestination, or else (which is worse) upon imaginary securities, that heaven is to be purchased upon conditions easier than a day's labour, and that an evil life may be reconciled to heaven by the intervening of little or single acts of piety or repentance. If either of them both have actually produced ill life, to which they are apt, or apt to be abused, the persons are miserable in their condition, and cannot be absolutely remedied by going about to cure the presumption; that was the cause of all, but now it is the least thing to be con-

sidered : his whole state is corrupted, and men will not by any discourses or spiritual arts used on their death-beds be put into a state of grace ; because then is no time to change the state, and there is no mutation then but by single actions ; from good to better a dying man may proceed, but not from the state of reprobation to the life of grace. And yet it is good charity to unloose the bonds of Satan, whereby the man is bound and led captive at his will, to take off the presumption by destroying the cause ; and then let the work of grace be set as forward as it can, and leave the event to God ; for nothing else is left possible to be done. But if the sick man be of a good life, and yet have a degree of confidence beyond his virtue upon the fancy of predestination, it is not then a time to rescind his opinion by a direct opposition, but let him be drawn off from the consideration of it by such discourses as are apt to make him humble and penitent ; for they are the most apt instruments to secure the condition of man and attemper his spirit. These are the great temptations incident to the last scene of our lives ; and are therefore more particularly suggested by the tempter, because they have in them something contrary to the universal effect of a holy life, and are designs to interpose between the end of the journey and the reception of the crown : and therefore it concerns every man who is in a capacity of "receiving the end of his faith, the salvation of his soul," to lay up in the course of his life something against this great day of expense, that he may be better fortified with the armour of the spirit against these last assaults of the devil, that he may not shipwreck in the haven.

16. Eschewing evil is but the one half of our work, we must also do good. And now in the few remanent days or hours of our life there are certain exercises of religion which have a special relation to this state, and are therefore of great concernment to be done, that we may make our

condition as certain as we can, and our portion of glory greater, and our pardon surer, and our love to increase, and that our former omissions and breaches be repaired with a condition in some measure proportionable to those great hopes which we then are going to possess. And first, let the sick person, in the beginning of his sickness, and in every change and great accident of it, make acts of resignation to God, entirely submit himself to the Divine will ; remembering, that sickness may, to men properly disposed, do the work of God, and produce the effect of the Spirit, and promote the interest of his soul, as well as health, and oftentimes better, as being in itself and by the grace of God apt to make us confess our impotency and dependences, and to understand our needs of mercy, and the continual influences and supports of heaven ; to withdraw our appetites from things below, to correct the vanities and insolences of an incontinent spirit, to abate the extravagances of the flesh, to put our carnal lusts into fetters and disability, to remember us of our state of pilgrimage, that this is our way and our stage of trouble and banishment, and that heaven is our country : for so sickness is the trial of our patience, a fire to purge us, and instructor to teach us, a bridle to restrain us, and a state inferring great necessities of union and adhesions unto God. And as upon these grounds we have the same reason to accept sickness at the hands of God, as to receive physic from a physician ; so it is argument of excellent grace to give God hearty thanks in our disease, and to accept it cheerfully, and with spiritual joy.

17. Some persons create to themselves excuses of discontent, and quarrel not with the pain, but the ill consequents of sickness, it makes them troublesome to their friends ; and consider not that their friends are bound to accept the trouble, as themselves to accept the sickness ; than to tend the sick is at that time allotted for the portion of

their work, and that charity receives it as a duty, and makes that duty to be a pleasure. And however, if our friends account us a burthen, let us also accept that circumstance of affliction to ourselves with the same resignation and indifferency as we entertain its occasion, the sickness itself; and pray to God to enkindle a flame of charity in their breasts, and to make them compensation for the charge and trouble we put them to; and then the care is at an end. But others excuse their discontent with a more religious colour, and call the disease their trouble and affliction, because it impedes their other parts of duty; they cannot preach, or study, or do exterior assistances of charity and alms, or acts of repentance and mortification. But it were well if we could let God proportion out our work, and set our task; let him choose what virtues we shall specially exercise: and when the will of God determines us, it is more excellent to endure afflictions with patience, equanimity, and thankfulness, than to do actions of the most pompous religion, and laborious or expensive charity; not only because there is a deliciousness in actions of religion and choice, which is more agreeable to our spirit than the toleration of sickness can be, which hath great reward, but no present pleasure; but also because our suffering and our employment is consecrated to us when God chooses it, and there is then no mixture of imperfection or secular interest, as there may be in other actions even of an excellent religion, when ourselves are the choosers. And let us also remember, that God hath not so much need of thy works, as thou hast of patience, humility, and resignation. St. Paul was far a more considerable person than thou canst be, and yet it pleased God to shut him in prison for two years, and in that interval God secured and promoted the work of the gospel: and although Epaphroditus was an excellent minister, yet God laid a sickness upon him, and even in his disease gave him work

enough to do, though not of his own choosing. And therefore fear it not but the ends of religion or duty will well enough proceed without thy health; and thy own eternal interest when God so pleases, shall better be served by sickness, and the virtue which it occasions, than by the opportunities of health, and an ambulatory active charity.

18. When thou art resigned to God, use fair and appointed means for thy recovery; trust not in thy spirit upon any instrument of health: as thou art willing to be disposed by God, so look not for any event upon the stock of any other cause or principle; be ruled by the physician and the people appointed to tend thee, that thou neither become troublesome to them, nor give any sign of impatience or a peevish spirit. But this advice only means, that thou do not disobey them out of any evil principle: and yet if reason be thy guide to choose any other aid, or follow any other counsel, use it temperately, prudently, and charitably. It is not intended for a duty, that thou shouldst drink oil instead of wine, if thy minister reach it to thee, as did St. Bernard; nor that thou shouldst accept a cake tempered with linseed oil instead of oil of olives, as did F. Stephen, mentioned by Rufinus: but that thou tolerate the defects of thy servants, and accept the evil accidents of thy disease, or the unsuccessfulness of thy physician's care, as descending on thee from the hands of God. Asa was noted in Scripture, that "in his sickness he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians." Louis the Eleventh of France was then the miserablest person in his kingdom, when he made himself their servant, courting them with great pensions and rewards, attending to their rules as oracles, and from their mouths waited for the sentence of life or death. We are in these great accidents, especially to look upon God as the disposer of the events, which he very often disposes contrary to the expectation

we may have of probable causes ; and sometimes without physic we recover, and with physic and excellent applications we grow worse and worse : and God it is that makes the remedies unprosperous. In all these and all other accidents, if we take care that the sickness of the body derive not itself into the soul, nor the pains of one procure impatience of the other, we shall alleviate the burthen and make it supportable and profitable. And certain it is, if men knew well to bear their sicknesses, humbly towards God, charitably towards our ministers, and cheerfully in themselves, there were no greater advantage in the world to be received than upon a sick bed ; and that alone hath in it the benefits of a church, of a religious assembly, of the works of charity and labour. And since our soul's eternal well-being depends upon the charities and providence and veracity of God, and we have nothing to shew for it but his word and goodness, and that is infinitely enough ; it is but reason we be not more nice and scrupulous about the usage and accommodation of our body : if we accept at God's hand sadness and dryness of affection and spiritual desertion patiently and with indifferency, it is unhand-some to express ourselves less satisfied in the accidents about our body.

19. But if the sickness proceed to death, it is a new charge upon our spirits, and God calls for a final and entire resignation into his hands. And to a person who was of humble affections, and in his lifetime of a mortified spirit, accustomed to bear the yoke of the Lord, this is easy, because he looks upon death not only as the certain condition of nature, but a necessary transition to a state of blessedness, as the determination of his sickness, the period of human infelicities, the last change of condition the beginning of a new, strange, and excellent life, a security against sin, a freedom from the importunities of a tempter, from the tyranny of an imperious lust, from the rebellion of concupis-

cence, from the disturbances and tempests of the irascible faculty, and from the fondness and childishness of the concupiscible ; and (St. Ambrose says well) " the trouble of this life and the dangers are so many, that in respect of them death is a remedy," and a fair proper object of desires. And we find that many saints have prayed for death, that they might not see the persecutions and great miseries incumbent upon the church : and if the desire be not out of impatience, but of charity, and with resignation, there is no reason to reprove it. Elias prayed that God would " take his life," that he might not see the evils of Ahab and Jezebel, and their vexatious intendments against the prophets of the Lord. And St. Austin, upon the incursion of the Vandals into Africa, called his clergy together, and at their chapter told them, " he had prayed to God either to deliver his people from the present calamity, or grant them patience to bear it, or that he would take him out of the world, that he might not see the miseries of his diocese ; adding, that God had granted him the last : " and he presently fell sick, and died in the siege of his own Hippo. And if death in many cases be desirable, and for many reasons, it is always to be submitted to, when God calls. And as it is always a misery to fear death, so it is very often a sin, or the effect of sin. If our love to the world hath fastened our affections here, it is a direct sin : and this is by the son of Sirach noted to be the case of rich and great personages ; " How bitter, O death, is thy remembrance to a man that is at rest in his possessions ! But if it be a fear to perish in the ruins of eternity, they are not to blame for fearing, but that their own ill lives have procured the fear. And yet there are persons in the state of grace, but because they are in great imperfection, have such lawful fears of death and of entering upon an uncertain sentence, which must stand eternally irreversible, be it good or bad, that they may with piety and care

enough pray David's prayer, "O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence, and be no more seen." But in this and in all other cases death must be accepted without murmur, though without fear it cannot. A man may pray to be delivered from it; and yet if God will not grant it, he must go on as one haled to execution: but if with all his imperfect fears he shall throw himself upon God, and accept his sentence as righteous, whether it speak life or death, it is an act of so great excellency, that it may equal the good actions of many succeeding and surviving days; and peradventure a longer life will be yet more imperfect, and that God therefore puts a period to it, that thou mayest be taken into a condition more certain, though less eminent. However, let not the fears of nature, or the fear of reason, or the fears of humility become accidentally criminal by a murmur or a pertinacious contesting against the event, which we cannot hinder, but ought to accept by an election secondary, rational, and upon supposition that God will not alter the sentence passed upon thy temporal life; always remembering, that in Christian philosophy death hath in it an excellency of which the angels are not capable. For by the necessity of our nature we are made capable of dying, for the Holy Jesus: and next to the privilege of that act, is our willingness to die at his command, which turns necessity into virtue, and nature into grace, and grace to glory.

20. When the sick person is thus disposed, let him begin to trim his wedding-garment, and dress his lamp with the repetition of acts of repentance, perpetually praying to God for pardon of his sins, representing to himself the horror of them, the multitude, the obliquity, being helped by arguments apt to excite contrition, by repetition of penitential Psalms and holy prayers; and he may, by accepting and humbly receiving his sickness at God's hand,

transmit it into the condition of an act or effect of repentance, acknowledging himself by sin to have deserved and procured it, and praying that the punishment of his crimes may be here, and not reserved for the state of separation, and for ever.

21. But above all single acts of this exercise, we are concerned to see that nothing of other men's goods stick to us, but let us shake it off as we would a burning coal from our flesh; for it will destroy us, it will carry a curse with us, and leave a curse behind us. Those who by thy means or importunity have become vicious, exhort to repentance and holy life; those whom thou hast cozened into crimes, restore to a right understanding; those who are by violence and interest led captive by thee to any uncleanness, restore to their liberty, and encourage to the prosecution of holiness; discover and confess thy fraud and unlawful arts, cease thy violence, and give as many advantages to virtue as thou hast done to viciousness. Make recompense for bodily wrongs, such as are wounds, dismemberings, and other disabilities: restore every man (as much as thou canst) to that good condition from which thou hast removed him: restore his fame, give back his goods, return the pawn, release forfeitures, and take off all unjust invasions or surprises of his estate, pay debts, satisfy for thy fraud and injustice as far as thou canst, and as thou canst, and as seen; or this alone is weight enough, no less than a millstone about thy neck. But if the dying man be of God, and in the state of grace, that is, if he have lived a holy life, repented seasonably, and have led a just, sober, and religious conversation in any acceptable degree, it is to be supposed he hath no great account to make for unpretended injuries and unjust detentions: for if he had detained the goods of his neighbour fraudulently or violently without amends, when it is in his power and opportunity to restore, he is not the man we suppose him in

this present question : and although in all cases he is bound to restore according to his ability, yet the act is less excellent when it is compelled, and so it seems to be, if he have continued the injustice till he is forced to quit the purchase. However, if it be not done till then, let it be provided for then. And that I press this duty to pious persons at this time, is only to oblige them to a diligent scrutiny concerning the lesser omissions of this duty, in the matter of fame, or lesser debts, or spiritual restitution : or that those unevenness of account which were but of late transaction may now be regulated ; and that whatsoever is undone in this matter from what principle soever it proceeds, whether of sin, or only of forgetfulness or of imperfection, may now be made as exact as we can, and are obliged ; and that those excuses which render it reasonable and lawful to defer restitution, as want of opportunity, clearness of ability, and accidental inconvenience, be now laid aside, and the action be done or provided for in the midst of all objection and inconvenient circumstances, rather than to omit it, and hazard to perform it.

22. Hither also I reckon resolutions, and forward purposes of emendation and greater severity, in case God return to us hopes of life ; which therefore must be reinforced, that we may serve the ends of God, and understand all his purposes, and make use of every opportunity ; every sickness laid upon us being with a design of drawing us nearer to God ; and even holy purposes are good actions of the spirit, and principles of the religion : and though alone they cannot do the work of grace, or change the state, when they are ineffectual, that is, when either we will not bring them into act, or that God will not let us : yet to a man already in the state of grace they are the additions of something good, and are like blowing of coals, which although it can put no life into a dead coal, yet it makes a live coal shine brighter and

burn clearer, and adds to some accidental degrees of heat.

23. Having thus disposed himself to the peace of God, let him make peace with all those in whom he knows or suspects any minutes of anger or malice, or displeasure towards him submitting himself to them with humility whom he unworthily hath displeased, asking pardon of them who say they are displeased, and offering pardon to them that have displeased him : and then let him crave the peace of holy church. For it is all this while to be supposed that he hath used the assistance and prayers, the counsel and the advices of a spiritual man, and that to this purpose he hath opened to him the state of his whole life, and made him to understand what emendations of his faults he hath made, what acts of repentance he hath done, how lived after his fall and reparation, and that he hath submitted all that he did or undid to the discerning of a holy man, whose office it is to guide his soul in this agony and last offices. All men cannot have the blessing of a wise and learned minister, and some die where they can have none at all : yet it were a safer course to do as much as we can, and to a competent person, if we can ; if we cannot, then to the best we have, according to as we judge it to be of spiritual advantage to us : for in this conjuncture of accidents it concerns us to be sure, if we may, and not to be deceived, where we can avoid it ; because we shall never return to life to do this work again. And if after this intercourse with a spiritual guide we be reconciled by the solemn prayer of the church, the prayer of absolution, it will be of great advantage to us ; we depart with our Father's blessing, we die in the actual communion of the church, we hear the sentence of God applied after the manner of men, and the promise of pardon made circumstantiate, material, present, and operative upon our spirits, and have our portion of the promise which is recorded by St. James, that

“ If the elders of the church pray over a sick person fervently and effectually, (add solemnly) his sins shall be forgiven him,” that is, supposing him to be in a capacity to receive it), because such prayers of such a man “ are very prevalent.”

21. All this is in a spiritual sense “ washing the hands in innocency,” and then let him go to the altar, let him not for an excuse less than impossibility omit to receive the holy sacrament; which the fathers assembled in the great Nicene council have taught all the Christian world to call “ the most necessary provisions for our last journey:” which is the memory of that death by which we hope for life; which is the seed of immortality and resurrection of our bodies; which unites our spirit to Christ; which is a great defensive against the hostilities of the devil: which is the most solemn prayer of the church, united and made acceptable by the sacrifice of Christ, which is then represented and exhibited to God: which is the great instrument of spiritual increase and the growth of grace; which is duty and reward, food and physic, health and pleasure, delectory and cordial, prayer and thanksgiving, and union of mysteries, the marriage of the soul, and the perfection of all the rites of Christianity: dying with the holy sacrament in us is a going to God with Christ in our arms, and interposing him between us and his angry sentence. But then we must be sure that we have done all the duty, without which we cannot communicate worthily. For else Satan comes in the place of Christ, and it is a horror not less than infinite to appear before God’s tribunal possessed in our souls with the spirit of darkness. True it is, that by many laws of the church, the bishop, and the minister are bound to give the holy eucharist to every person who in the article of apparent danger of death desires it, provided that he hath submitted himself to the impositions and counsels of the bishop or guide of his soul, that in case

he recovers, he may be brought to the peace of God and his church by such steps and degrees of repentance by which other public sinners are reconciled. But to this gentleness of discipline and easiness of administration those excellent persons who made the canons thought themselves compelled by the rigour of the Novations: and because they admitted not lapsed persons to the peace of the church upon any terms, though never so great, so public, or so penal a repentance; therefore these not only remitted them to the exercise and station of penitents, but also to the communion. But the fathers of the council of Eliberis denied this favour to persons who after baptism were idolaters; either intending this as a great argument to alright persons from so great a crime, or else believing that it was unpardonable after baptism, a contradiction to that state which we entered into by baptism and the covenant evangelical. However, I desire all learned persons to observe it, and the less learned also to make use of it, that those more ancient counsels of the church which commanded the holy communion to be given to dying persons, meant only such which, according to the custom of the church, were under the conditions of repentance, that is, such to whom punishment and discipline of divers years were enjoined and if it happened they died in the interval, before the expiration of their time of reconciliation, then they admitted them to the communion. Which describes to us the doctrine of those ages when religion was purer and discipline was more severe, and holy life secured by rules of excellent government; that those only were fit to come to that feast who before their last sickness had finished the repentance of many years, or at least had undertaken it. I cannot say it was so always,* and in

* It certainly was not so in any of the first churches, where the apostles administered the sacrament. There is not a word in the New Testament about giving the sacrament to the dying.—Ed.

all churches; for as the disciples grew slack, or men's persuasion had varied, so they were more ready to grant repentance as well as absolution to dying persons; but it was otherwise in the best times, and with severer prelates.

And certainly it were great charity to deny the communion to persons who have lived viciously till their death; provided it be by competent authority, and done sincerely, prudently, and without temporal interest: to other persons, who have lived good lives, or repented of their bad, though less perfectly, it ought not to be denied, and they less ought to neglect it.

25. But as every man must put himself, so also he must put his house in order, make his will, if he have an estate to dispose of: and in that he must be careful to do justice to every man, and charity to the poor, according as God hath enabled him: and though charity is then very late, if it begins not earlier; yet if this be but an act of an ancient habit, it is still more perfect, as it succeeds in time, and superadds to the former stock. And among other acts of duty let it be remembered, that it is excellent charity to leave our will and desires clear, plain, and determinate, that contention and lawsuits may be prevented by the explicate declaration of the legacies. At last and in all instances and periods of our following days let the former good acts be renewed; let God be praised for all his graces and blessings of our life, let him be entreated for pardon of our sins, let acts of love and contrition, of hope, of joy, of humility be the work of every day which God still permits us, always remembering to ask remission for those sins we remember not. And if the condition of our sickness permits it, let our last breath expire with an act of love; that it may begin the charities of eternity, and like a taper burnt to its lowest base, it may go out with a great emission of light, leaving a sweet smell behind us to perfume our coffin: and that these

lights, newly made brighter or trimmed up in our sickness, may shine about our hearse, that they become arguments of a pious sadness to our friends, (as the charitable coats which Dorcas made, were to the widows) and exemplar to all those who observed, or shall hear of, our holy and religious death. But if it shall happen that the disease be productive of evil accidents, as a disturbed fancy, a weakened understanding, wild discouragements, or any deprivation of the use of reason, it concerns the sick persons, in the happy intervals of a quiet untroubled spirit, to pray earnestly to God that nothing may pass from him in the rages of a fever or worse distemper which may less become his duty, or give scandal, or cause trouble to the persons in attendance: and if he shall also renounce and disclaim all such evil words which his disease may speak, not himself, he shall do the duty of a Christian and a prudent person. And after these preparatives, he may with piety and confidence resign his soul into the hands of God, to be deposited in holy receptacles till "the day of restitution of all things;" and in the mean time with a quiet spirit descend into that state which is the lot of Cæsars, and where all kings and conquerors have laid aside their glories.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal and holy Jesus, who by death hast overcome death, and by thy passion hast taken out its sting, and made it to become one of the gates of heaven, and an entrance to felicity; have mercy upon me now and at the hour of my death: let thy grace accompany me all the days of my life, that I may by a holy conversation, and an habitual performance of my duty, wait for the coming of our Lord, and be ready

to enter with thee at whatsoever hour thou shalt come. Lord, let not my death be in any sense unprovided, not untimely, nor hasty, but after the common manner of men, having in it nothing extraordinary, but an extraordinary piety, and the manifestation of a great and miraculous mercy. Let my senses and understanding be preserved entire till the last of my days, and grant that I may die the death of the righteous, having first discharged all my obligations of justice, leaving none miserable and unprovided in my departure; but be thou the portion of all my friends and relatives, and let thy blessing descend upon their heads, and abide there, till they shall meet me in the bosom of our Lord. Preserve me ever in the communion and peace of the church; and bless my death-bed with the opportunity of a holy and a spiritual guide, with the assistance and guard of angels, with the perception of the holy sacrament, with patience and dereliction of my own desires, with a strong faith, and a firm and humble hope, with just measures of repentance, and great treasures of charity to thee my God, and to all the world; that my soul in the arms of the holy Jesus may be deposited with safety and joy, there to expect the revelation of thy day, and then to partake the glories of thy kingdom, O eternal and holy Jesus. Amen.

Considerations upon the Crucifixion of the Holy Jesus.

1. When the sentence of death pronounced against the Lord was to be put in execution, the soldiers pulled off the robe of mockery, the scarlet mantle, which in jest they put upon him, and put on his own garments. But, as Origen observes, the evangelist mentioned not that they took off the crown of thorns; what might

serve their interest they pursue, but nothing of remission or mercy to the afflicted Son of man: but so it became the King of sufferings, not to lay aside his imperial thorns, till they were changed into diadems of glory. But now Abel is led forth by his brother to be slain. A gay spectacle to satisfy impious eyes, who would not stay behind, but attended and waited upon the hangman to see the catastrophe of this bloody tragedy. But when piety looks on, she beholds a glorious mystery. Sin laughed to see the King of heaven and earth, and the great lover of souls, instead of the sceptre of his kingdom, bear a tree of cursing and shame. But piety wept tears of pity, and knew they would melt into joy, when she should behold that cross which loaded the shoulders of her Lord afterward sit upon the sceptres, and be engraved and signed upon the foreheads of kings.

2. It cannot be thought but the ministers of Jewish malice used all the circumstances of affliction which, in any case, were accustomed towards malefactors and persons to be crucified, and therefore it was that in some old figures we see our blessed Lord described with a table appendant to the fringe of his garment, set full of nails and pointed iron; for so sometimes they afflicted persons condemned to that kind of death: and St. Cyprian affirms that Christ did stick to the wood that he carried, being galled with the iron at his heels, and nailed even before his crucifixion. But this and the other accidents of his journey, and their malice so crushed his wounded, tender, and virginal body, that they were forced to lay the load upon a Cyrenian, fearing that he should die with less shame and smart than they intended him. But so he was pleased to take man unto his aid, not only to represent his own need and the ~~colorousness~~ ^{gloriousness} of his passion, but to consign the duty unto man, that we must enter into a fellowship of Christ's sufferings, taking up the

cross of martyrdom when God requires us, enduring affronts, being patient under affliction, loving them that hate us, and being benefactors to our enemies, abstaining from sensual and intemperate delight, forbidding to ourselves lawless festivities and recreations of our weariness, when we have an end of the spirit to serve upon the ruins of the body's strength, mortifying our desires, breaking our own will, not seeking ourselves, being entirely resigned to God. These are the cross, and the nails, and the spear, and the whip, and all the instruments of a Christian's passion. And we may consider that every man in this world shall in some sense or other bear a cross : few men escape it, and it is not well with them that do : but they only bear it well that follow Christ, and tread in his steps, and bear it for his sake, and walk as he walked ; and he that follows his own desires, when he meets with a cross here, (as it is certain enough he will) bears the cross of his concupiscence, and that hath no fellowship with the cross of Christ. By the precept of " bearing the cross," we are not tied to pull evil upon ourselves, that we may imitate our Lord in nothing but in being afflicted ; nor to personate the punitive exercises of mortification and severe abstinences which were eminent in some saints, and to which they had special assistances, as others had the gift of chastity, and for which they had special reason, and, as they apprehended some great necessities : but it is required that " we bear our own cross," so said our dearest Lord. For when the cross of Christ is laid upon us, and we are called to martyrdom, then it is our own, because God made it to be our portion : and when by the necessities of our spirit and the rebellion of our body we need exterior mortifications and acts of self-denial, then also it is our own cross, because our needs have made it so ; and so it is when God sends us sickness or any other calamity ; whatever is either an effect of our ghostly needs, or the

condition of our temporal estate, it calls for our sufferance and patience, and equanimity ; for " therefore Christ hath suffered for us, (saith St. Peter) leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps," who bore his cross as long as he could, and when he could no longer, he murmured not, but sank under it ; and then he was content to receive such aid, not as he chose himself, but such as was assigned him.

3. Jesus was led out of the gates of Jerusalem, that he might become the sacrifice for persons without the pale, even for all the world : and the daughters of Jerusalem followed him with pious tears till they came to Calvary, a place difficult in the ascent, eminent and apt for the publication of shame, a hill of death and dead bones, polluted and impure, and there beheld Him stripped naked, who clothes the field with flowers, and all the world with robes, and the whole globe with the canopy of heaven ; and so dressed, that now every circumstance was a triumph : by his disgrace he trampled upon our pride ; by his poverty and nakedness he triumphed over our covetousness and love of riches ; and by his pains chastised the delicacies of our flesh, and broke in pieces the fetters of concupiscence. For as soon as Adam was clothed he quitted paradise ; and Jesus was made naked, that he might bring us in again. And we also must be despoiled of all our exterior adherences, that we may pass through the regions of duty and divine love to a society of blessed spirits, and a clarified, immortal, and beatified estate.

4. There they nailed Jesus with four nails, fixed his cross in the ground, which, with its fall into the place of its station, gave infinite torture by so violent a concussion of the body of our Lord, which rested upon nothing but four great wounds ; where he was designed to suffer a long and lingering torment. For crucifixion, as it was an excruciating pain, sharp and pas-

sionate, so it was not of quick effect towards taking away the life. St. Andrew was two whole days upon the cross: and some martyrs have upon the cross been rather starved and devoured with birds, than killed with the proper torment of the tree. But Jesus took all his passion with a voluntary susception, God heightening it to great degrees of torment supernaturally; and he laid down his life voluntarily, when his Father's wrath was totally appeased towards mankind.

5. Some have fancied that Christ was pleased to take something from every condition of which man ever was or shall be possessed; taking immunity from sin from Adam's state of innocence; punishment and misery from the state of Adam fallen; the fullness of grace from the state of renovation and perfect contemplation of the divinity; and beatific joys from the state of comprehension and the blessedness of heaven; meaning, that the humanity of our blessed Saviour did in the sharpest agony of his passion behold the face of God, and communicate in glory. But I consider that, although the two natures of Christ were knit by a mysterious union into one person, yet the natures still retain their incommunicable properties. Christ as God is not subject to sufferings, as a man he is the subject of miseries; as God he is eternal, as man, mortal and commensurable by time; as God, the supreme lawgiver; as man, most humble and obedient to the law: and therefore that the human nature was united to the divine, it does not imply that it must in all instances partake of the divine felicities, which in God are essential, but to man communicated without necessity, and by an arbitrary dispensation. Add to this, that some virtues and excellences were in the soul of Christ which could not consist with the state of glorified and beatified persons; such as humility, poverty of spirit, hope, holy desires; all which, having their seat in the soul, suppose even in the

supremest faculty a state of pilgrimage, that is, a condition which is imperfect, and in order to something beyond its present. For therefore "Christ ought to suffer, (saith our blessed Lord himself) and so enter into his glory." And St. Paul affirms, that "we see Jesus made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." And again, "Christ humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name." Thus his present life was a state of merit and work, and as a reward of it he was "crowned with glory and immortality," his name was exalted, his kingdom glorified, he was made the Lord of all the creatures, the first fruits of the resurrection, the exemplar of glory, and the prince and head of the catholic church: and because this was his recompense, and the fruits of his humility and obedience, it is certain it was not a necessary consequence and a natural efflux of the personal union of the godhead with the humanity. This I discourse to this purpose, that we may not in our esteem lessen the suffering of our dearest Lord, by thinking he had the supports of actual glory in the midst of all his sufferings. For there is no one minute or ray of glory but its fruition does outweigh and make us insensible of the greatest calamities, and of all the spirit of pain which can be extracted from all the infelicities of this world. True it is, that the greatest beauties in this world are receptive of an alloy of sorrow, and nothing can have pleasure in all capacities. The most beauteous feathers of the birds of paradise, the ostrich, or the peacock, if put into our throat, are not there so pleasant as to the eye; but the beatific joys of the least glory of heaven take away all pain, "wipe away all tears from our eyes:" and it is not possible that at the same instant the soul of Jesus should be ravished with glory, and yet abated

with pains grievous and afflictive. On the other side, some say that the soul of Jesus upon the cross suffered the pains of hell, and all the torments of the damned, and that without such sufferings it is not imaginable he should pay the price which God's wrath should demand of us. But the same that reproves the one does also reprehend the other; for the hope that was the support of the soul of Jesus, as it confesses an imperfection that is not consistent with the state of glory, so it excludes the *despair* that is the torment proper to accursed souls. Our dearest Lord suffered the whole condition of humanity, "sin only excepted," and freed us from hell with suffering those sad pains, and merited heaven for his own humanity, as the head, and all faithful people, as the members of his mystical body. And therefore his life here was only a state of pilgrimage, not at all trimmed with beatific glories. Much less was he ever in the state of hell, or upon the cross felt the formal misery and spirit of torment, which is the portion of damned spirits; because it was impossible Christ should despair, and without despair it is impossible there should be a hell. But it is highly probable, that in the intension of degrees and present anguish the soul of our Lord might feel a greater load of wrath than is incumbent in every instant upon perishing souls. For all the sadness which may be imagined to be in hell consists in acts produced from principles that cannot surpass the force of human or angelical nature; but the pain which our blessed Lord endured for the expiation of our sins was an issue of an united and concentrated anger, was received into the heart of God and man, and was commensurate to the whole latitude of the grace, patience, and charity, of the word incarnate.

6. And now behold the priest and the sacrifice of all the world laid upon the altar of the cross, bleeding, and tortured, and dying, to reconcile his Father to us: and he was arrayed

with ornaments more glorious than the robes of Aaron. The crown of thorns was his mitre. the cross his pastoral staff, the nails piercing his hands were instead of rings, the ancient ornaments of priests, and his flesh rased and chequered with blue and blood instead of the party coloured robe. But as this object calls for our devotion, our love and eucharist, to our dearest Lord; so it must needs alienate us from sin, which in the eye of all the world brought so great shame and pain and amazement upon the Son of God, when he only became engaged by a charitable substitution of himself in our place; and therefore we are assured, by the demonstration of sense and experience, that it will bring death and all imaginable miseries as the just expresses of God's indignation and hatred. For to this we may apply the words of our Lord in the prediction of miseries to Jerusalem, "if this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" For it is certain, that Christ infinitely pleased his Father even by becoming the person made guilty in estimate of law; and yet the so great charity of our Lord, and the so great love and pleasure of his Father, exempted him not from suffering pains intolerable: and much less shall those escape who provoke and displease God, and "despise so great salvation," which the holy Jesus hath wrought with the expense of blood and so precious a life.

7. But here we see a great representation and testimony of the divine justice, who was so angry with sin, who had so severely threatened it, who does so essentially hate it, that he would not spare his only Son, when he became a conjunct person, relative to the guilt by undertaking the charges of our nature. For although God hath set down in holy scripture the order of his justice, and the manner of its manifestation, that one soul shall not perish for the sins of another; yet this is meant for justice and for mercy too, that is, he will not

curse the son for the father's fault, or in any relation whatsoever substitute one person for another, to make him involuntarily guilty. But when this shall be desired by a person that cannot finally perish, and does a mercy to the exempt persons, and is a voluntary act of the suscipient, and shall in the event also redound to an infinite good, it is no deflexion from the divine justice to excuse many by the affliction of one, who also for that very suffering shall have infinite compensation. We see that for the sin of Cham all his posterity were accursed. The subjects of David died with the plague, because their prince numbered the people. Idolatry is punished in the children of the fourth generation. Saul's seven sons were hanged for breaking the league of Gibeon; and Ahab's sin was punished in his posterity, he escaping, and "the evil was brought upon his house in his son's days. In all these cases the evil descended upon persons in near relation to the sinner, and was a punishment to him and a misery to these, and were either chastisements also of their own sins, or if they were not, they served other ends of providence, and led the afflicted innocent to a condition of recompense accidentally procured by that infliction. But if for such relation's sake and economical and political conjunction, as between prince and people, the evil may be transmitted from one to another, much rather is it just, when by contract a competent and conjunct person undertakes to quit his relative. Thus when the hand steals, the back is whipped; and an evil eye is punished with a hungry belly. Treason causes the whole family to be miserable; and a sacrilegious grandfather hath sent a locust to devour the increase of the nephews.

8. But in our case it is a voluntary contract, and therefore no injustice; all parties are voluntary. God is the supreme Lord, and his actions are the measure of justice. We, who

had deserved the punishment, had great reason to desire a redeemer; and yet Christ, who was to pay the ransom, was more desirous of it than we were, for we asked it not before it was promised and undertaken. But thus we see that sureties pay the obligation of the principal debtor, and the pledges of contracts have been by the best and wisest nations slain when the articles have been broken. The Thessalians slew two hundred and fifty pledges; the Romans three hundred of the Volsci, and threw the Tarentines from the Tarpian rock. And that it may appear Christ was a person in all senses competent to do this for us, himself testifies that he had "power over his own life, to take it up, or lay it down." And therefore as there can be nothing against the most exact justice and reason of laws and punishments; so it magnifies the divine mercy, which removes the punishment from us, who of necessity must have sunk under it, and yet makes us to adore His severity, who would not forgive us without punishing his Son for us; to consign us unto his perfect hatred against sin, to conserve the sacredness of his laws, and to imprint upon us great characters of fear and love. The famous Locrian, Zaleucus, made a law, that all adulterers should lose both their eyes: his son was first unhappily surprised in the crime; and his father, to keep a temper between the piety and soft spirit of a parent, and the justice and severity of a judge, put out one of his own eyes, and one of his son's. So God did with us; he made some abatement: that is, as to the person with whom he was angry, but inflicted his anger upon our Redeemer, whom he essentially loved, to secure the dignity of his sanctions and the sacredness of obedience; so marrying justice and mercy by the intervening of a commutation. Thus David escaped by the death of his son; God choosing that penalty for the expiation. And Cimon offered himself to prison, to purchase

the liberty of his father Miltiades. It was a filial duty in Cimon, and yet the law was satisfied. And both these concurred in our great Redeemer. For God who was the sole arbitrator, so disposed it, and the eternal Son of God submitted to this way of expiating our crimes, and became an argument of faith and belief of the great article of "remission of sins," and other its appendant causes and effects and adjuncts; it being wrought by a visible and notorious passion. It was made an encouragement of hope; for "he that spared not his own son to reconcile us, will with him give all things else to us so reconciled." And a great endearment of our duty and love, as it was a demonstration of his. And in all the changes and traverses of our life he is made to us a great example of all excellent actions and all patient sufferings.

9. In the midst of two thieves, three long hours the holy Jesus hung clothed with pain, agony, and dishonour, all of them so eminent and vast, that he who could not but hope, whose soul was enchased with divinity, and dwelt in the bosom of God, and in the cabinet of the mysterious trinity, yet had a cloud of misery so thick and black drawn before him, that he complained as if God had forsaken him: but this was "the pillar of cloud" which conducted Israel into Canaan. And as God, behind the cloud, supported the Holy Jesus, and stood ready to receive him into the union of his glories; so his soul in that great desertion had internal comforts proceeding from consideration of all those excellent persons which should be adopted into the fellowship of his sufferings, which should imitate his graces, which should communicate his glories. And we follow this cloud to our country, having Christ for our guide: and though he trod the way, leaning upon the cross, which like the staff of Egypt pierced his hands; yet it is to us a comfort and support, pleasant to our spirits

as the sweetest canes, strong as the pillars of the earth, and made apt for our use by having been born and made smooth by the hands of our elder brother.

10. In the midst of all his torments Jesus only made one prayer of sorrow to represent his sad condition to his Father; but no accent of murmur, no syllable of anger against his enemies. Instead of that he sent up a holy, charitable, and effective prayer for their forgiveness, and by that prayer obtained of God that, within fifty-five days, eight thousand of his enemies were converted. So potent is the prayer of charity, that it prevails above the malice of men, turning the arts of Satan into the designs of God; and when malice occasions the prayer becomes an antidote to malice. And by this instance our blessed Lord consigned that duty to us which in his sermons he had preached, that we should forgive our enemies, and pray for them: and by so doing ourselves are freed from the stings of anger, and the storms of a revengeful spirit, and we oftentimes procure servants to God, friends to ourselves, and heirs to the kingdom of heaven.

11. Of the two thieves that were crucified together with our Lord, the one blasphemed; the other had at that time the greatest piety in the world, except that of the blessed virgin, and particularly had such a faith, that all the ages of the church could never shew the like. For when he saw "Christ in the same condemnation" with himself, crucified by the Romans, accused and scorned by the Jews, forsaken by his own apostles, a dying distressed man, doing at that time no miracles to attest his divinity or innocence; yet then he confesses him to be a Lord, and a King, and his Saviour: he confessed his own shame and unworthiness, he submitted to the death of the cross, and, by his voluntary acceptation and tacit volition of it, made it equivalent to as great a punishment

of his own susception ; he showed an incomparable modesty, begging but for a remembrance only, he knew himself so sinful, he durst ask no more ; he reprov'd the other thief for blasphemy ; he confessed the world to come, and own'd Christ publicly, he pray'd to him, he hop'd in him, and pitied him, shewing an excellent patience in this sad condition. And this I consider, that besides the excellency of some of these acts, and the goodness of all, the like occasion for so exemplary faith never can occur ; and until all these things shall in these circumstances meet in any one man, he must not hope for so safe an exit after an evil life upon the confidence of this example. But now Christ had the key of paradise in his hand, and God blessed the good thief with this opportunity of letting him in, who at another time might have waited longer, and been tied to harder conditions. And indeed it is very probable that he was much advantaged by the intervening accident of dying at the same time with Christ ; there being a natural compassion produced in us towards the partners of our miseries. For Christ was not void of human passions, though he had in them no imperfection or irregularity, and therefore might be invited by the society of misery, the rather to admit him to participate his joys ; and St. Paul proves him to be a "merciful high priest," because "he was touched with the feeling of our infirmities : the first expression which was to this blessed thief ; Christ and he together sat at the supper of bitter herbs, and Christ pay'd his symbol, promising that he should "that day be" together "with him in paradise."

12. By the cross of Christ stood the holy virgin-mother, upon whom old Simeon's prophecy was now verified : for now she felt "a sword passing through her very soul : " she stood, without clamour and womanish noises, sad, silent, and with modest grief, deep as the waters of the abyss, but smooth as the face of a pool, full of love,

and patience, and sorrow, and hope. Now she was put to it to make use of all those excellent discourses her holy Son had used to build up her spirit, and fortify it against this day. Now she felt the blessings and strength of faith, and she passed from the griefs of the passion to the expectation of the resurrection, and she rested in this death as in a sad remedy ; for she knew it reconciled God with all the world. But her hope drew a veil before her sorrow ; and though her grief was great enough to swallow her up, yet her love was greater, and did swallow up her grief. But the sun also had a veil upon his face, and taught us to draw a curtain before the Passion, which would be the most artificial expression, of its greatness, whilst by silence and wonder we confess it beyond our expression, or, which is all one, great as the burthen and baseness of our sins. And with this veil drawn before the face of Jesus let us suppose him at the gates of paradise, calling with his last words in a loud voice to have them opened, that "the King of glory might come in."

PRAYER.

O Holy Jesus, who for our sakes didst suffer incomparable anguish and pains commensurate to thy love and our miseries, which were infinite, that thou mightest purchase for us blessings upon earth, and an inheritance in heaven ; dispose us by thy love, thankfulness, humility and obedience, to receive all the benefit of thy passion, granting unto us and by thy whole church remission of all our sins, integrity of mind, health of body, competent maintenance, peace in our days, a temperate air, fruitfulness of the earth, unity and integrity of faith, extirpation of heresies, reconciliation of schisms, destruction of all wicked counsels intended against us ; and bind the hands of rapine and sacrilege, that

they may not destroy the vintage, and root up the vine itself. Multiply thy blessings upon us, sweetest Jesus, increase in us true religion, sincere and actual devotion in our prayers, patience in troubles, and whatsoever is necessary to our soul's health, or conducing to thy glory. Amen.

2. O dearest Saviour, I adore thy mercies and thy incomparable love expressed in thy so voluntary susception and affectionate suffering such horrid and sad tortures, which cannot be remembered without a sad compassion; the waters of bitterness entered into thy soul, and the storms of death and thy Father's anger broke thee in all pieces: and what shall I do, who by my sins have so tormented my dearest Lord? what contrition can be great enough, what tears sufficiently expressive, what hatred

and detestation of my crimes can be equal and commensurate to those sad accidents which they have produced? Pity me, O Lord, pity me, dearest God, turn those thy merciful eyes towards me, O most merciful Redeemer; for my sins are great, like unto thy passion, full of sorrow and shame, and a burthen too great for me to bear. Lord, who hast done so much for me, now only speak the word, and thy servant shall be whole. Let thy wounds heal me, thy virtues amend me, thy death quicken me; that I in this life, suffering the cross of a sad and salutary repentance, in the union and merits of thy cross and passion, may die with thee, and rest with thee, and rise again with thee, and live with thee, for ever in the possession of thy glories, O dearest Saviour Jesus. Amen.

SECTION XVI.

OF THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS.

1. WHILE it was yet "early in the morning, upon the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome brought sweet spices to the sepulchre," that they might embalm the holy body; (for the rites of embalming among the Hebrews used to last forty days) and their love was not satisfied with what Joseph had done. They therefore hastened to the grave; and after they had expended their money, and bought the spices, they began to consider, "who shall remove the stone." But yet they still go on, and their love answers the objection, not knowing how it should be done, but yet resolving to go through all the difficulties; but never remember or take care to pass the guards of soldiers. But when they came to the sepulchre, they found the guard affrighted and removed, and "the stone rolled away;" for there had a little before their arrival been a great earthquake, and "an angel descending from heaven rolled away the stone, and sat upon it;" and for fear of him the guards about the tomb became astonished with fear, and were like dead men. And some of them ran to the high priests, and told them what happened. But they now resolving to make their iniquity safe and unquestionable by a new crime, hire the soldiers to tell an incredible and a weak fable, that "his disciples came by night and stole him away." Against which accident the wit of man could give no more security than them-

selves had made. The women entered into the sepulchre, and missing the body of Jesus, Mary Magdalene ran to the eleven apostles, complaining that the body of our Lord was not to be found. Then Peter and John ran as fast as they could to see: for the unexpectedness of the relation, the wonder of the story and the sadness of the person moved some affections in them, which were kindled by the first principles and sparks of faith, but were not made actual and definite, because the faith was not raised to a flame: they looked into the sepulchre, and finding not the body there, they returned. By this time, Mary Magdalene was come back, and the women who stayed weeping for their Lord's body "saw two angels sitting in white, the one at the head, and the other at the feet;" at which unexpected sight they trembled, and bowed themselves: but an angel bid them not fear, telling them that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, was also risen, and was not there, and called to mind what Jesus had told them in Galilee concerning his crucifixion and resurrection, the third day.

2. "And Mary Magdalene turned herself back, and saw Jesus; but supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. But Jesus said unto her, Mary." Then she knew his voice, and with ecstasy of joy and wonder was ready to have crushed his feet with her em-

*Considerations upon the Accidents happening
in the Interval, after the death of the
Holy Jesus, until his Resurrection.*

I. THE Holy Jesus promised to the blessed thief, that he should "that day be with him in paradise;" which therefore was certainly a place or state of blessedness, because it was a promise; and in the society of Jesus, whose penal and afflictive part of his work of redemption was finished upon the cross. Our blessed Lord did not promise he should that day be with him in his kingdom, for that day it was not opened, and the everlasting doors of those interior recesses were to be shut till after the resurrection, that Himself was to ascend thither, and make way for all his servants to enter, in the same method in which he went before us. Our blessed Lord "descended into hell," saith the creed of the apostles, from the sermon of St. Peter, as he from the words of David; that is, into the state of separation and common receptacle of spirits, according to the style of scripture. But the name of hell is nowhere in scripture an appellative of the kingdom of Christ, of the place of final and supreme glory. But concerning the verification of our Lord's promise to the beatified thief, and his own state of separation, we must take what light we can from scripture, and what we can from the doctrine of the primitive church. St. Paul had two great revelations; he was "wrapped up into paradise, and he was wrapped up into the third heaven:" and these he calls visions and revelations, not one but divers: for paradise is distinguished from the "heaven of the blessed," being itself a receptacle of holy souls, made illustrious with visitation of angels, and happy by being a repository for such spirits who at the day of judgment shall go forth into eternal glory. In the interim Christ hath trod all the

paths before us, and this also we must pass through to arrive at the courts of heaven. Justin Martyr said it was the doctrine of heretical persons to say that the souls of the blessed instantly upon the separation from their bodies enter into the highest heaven. And Irenæus makes heaven and the intermediate receptacle of souls to be distinct places: both blessed, but hugely differing in degrees. Tertullian is dogmatical in the assertion, that till the voice of the great archangel be heard, and as long as Christ sits at the right hand of his Father, making intercession for the church, so long blessed souls must expect the assembling of their brethren, the great congregation of the church, that they may all pass from their outer courts into the inward tabernacle, the holy of holies, to the throne of God. And as it is certain that no soul could enter into glory before our Lord entered, by whom we hope to have access: so it is most agreeable to the proportion of the mysteries of our redemption, that we believe the entrance into glory to have been made by our Lord at his glorious ascension, and that his soul went not thither before then, to come back again, to be contracted into the span of humanity, and dwell forty days in his body upon earth. But that he should return from paradise, that is, from the common receptacle of departed spirits who died in the love of God, to earth again, had in it no lessening of his condition, since himself in mercy called back Lazarus from thence, and some others also returned to live a life of grace, which in all senses is less than the least of glories. Sufficient it is to us, that all holy souls departing go into the hands, that is, into the custody, of our Lord; that "they rest from their labours; that their works shall follow them," and overtake them too, at the day of judgment; that they are happy presently; that they are visited by angels; that God sends, as he pleases, excellent irradiations and ~~type~~ of glory to en-

tain them in their mansions ; that their condition is secured : but “ the crown of righteousness is laid up ” against the great day of judgment, and then to be produced and given to St. Paul, and “ to all that love the coming of our Lord ; ” that is, to all who either here in duty, or in their receptacles, with joy and certain hope long for the revelation of that day. At the day of judgment Christ will “ send the angels, and they shall gather together the elect from the four winds ; ” and all the refuse of men, evil persons, they shall “ throw into everlasting burning.” Then our blessed Lord shall call to the elect to enter into the kingdom, and reject the cursed into the portion of devils ; for whom the fire is but now prepared in the interval. For “ we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, (saith St. Paul) that every man may receive in his body according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil.” Out of the body the reception of the reward is not. And therefore, St. Peter affirms, that “ God hath delivered the evil angels into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” And St. Jude saith, “ the angels which kept not their first faith, but left their first habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” And therefore the devils expiated with our blessed Saviour, “ Art thou come to torment us before the time ? ” And the same also he does to evil men, “ reserving the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” For since the actions which are to be judged are the actions of the whole man, so also must be the judicature. And our blessed Saviour intimated this to his apostles ; “ In my Father’s house are many mansions : but I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go away, I will come again, and take you unto me ; that where I am, there ye may be also.” At Christ’s second coming this is to be performed. Many outer courts, many different places or different states

there may be ; and yet there is a place whither holy souls shall arrive at last, which was not then ready for us, and was not to be entered into until the entrance of our Lord had made the preparation. And that is, certainly, the highest heaven, called by St. Paul the third heaven ; because the other receptacles were ready, and full of holy souls, patriarchs and prophets, and holy men of God ; concerning whom St. Paul affirms expressly, that “ the fathers received not the promises : God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Therefore certain it is that their condition was a state of imperfection, and yet they were placed in paradise, in Abraham’s bosom ; and thither Christ went, and the blessed thief attended him. And then it was that Christ made their condition better. For though still it be a place of relation, in order to something beyond it, yet the term and object of their hope are changed. They sat in the regions of darkness, expecting that great promise made to Adam and the patriarchs, the promise of the Messiah : but when he that was promised came, he “ preached to the spirits in prison,” he communicated to them the mysteries of the gospel, “ the secrets of the kingdom,” the things hidden from eternal ages, and taught them to look up to the glories purchased by his passion, and made the term of their expectation to be his second coming, and the objects of their hope the glories of the beatific vision. And although the state of separation is sometimes in scripture called heaven, and sometimes hell, (for these words in scripture are of large significations ;) yet it is never called “ the third heaven, nor the hell of the damned.” For although concerning it nothing is clearly revealed, or what is their portion till the day of judgment : yet it is intimated in a parable, that between good and evil spirits even in the state of separation there is distance of place. Certain it is, there is

great distance of condition ; and as the holy souls in their regions of light are full of love, joy, hope, and longing for the coming of the great day, so the accursed do expect it with an insupportable amazement, and are presently tormented with apprehensions of the future. Happy are they that through paradise pass into the kingdom ; who from their highest hope pass to the greatest charity ; from the state of a blessed separation, to the mercies and gentle sentence of "the day of judgment," which St. Paul prayed to God to grant Onesiphorus ; and more explicitly for the Thessalonians, "that their whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus." And I pray God to grant the same to me, and all faithful people whatsoever.

2. As soon as the Lord had "given up his spirit" into the hands of God, "the veil of the temple was rent," the angel guardians of the place deserted it, the rites of Moses were laid open, and the inclosures of the tabernacle were disparted, "the earth trembled, the graves were opened," and all the old world and the old religion were so shaken towards their first chaos, that if God had not supported the one, and reserved the other for an honourable burial, the earth had ceased to support her children, and the synagogue had been thrown out to an inglorious exposure and contempt. But yet in these symbols they were changed from their first condition, and passed into a new dominion ; all "old things passed away, and all things became new ; the earth and the heavens were reckoned as a new creation," they passed into another kingdom, under Christ their Lord ; and as before the creatures were servants of human necessities, they now become servants of election, and in order to the ends of grace, as before of nature ; Christ having now the power to dispose of them in order to his kingdom, and by the administration of his own

wisdom. And at the instant of these accidents God so determined the persuasions of men, that they referred these prodigies of the honour to Christ, and took them as testimonies of that truth, for the affirmation of which the high priest had condemned our dearest Lord : and although the heart of the priest rent not, even then when rocks did tear in pieces ; yet the people, who saw the passion, "smote their breasts, and returned, and confessed Christ."

3. The graves of the dead were opened at the death, but the dead bodies of the saints that slept, arose not till the resurrection of our Lord ; for he was "the first fruits," and they followed him as instant witnesses, to publish the resurrection of their head, which it is possible they declared to those to whom they "appeared in the Holy City." And amongst these, the curiosity or pious credulity of some have supposed Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who therefore were careful to be buried in the land of promise, as having some intimation or hope that *they* might be partakers of the earliest glories of the Messiah, in whose faith and distant expectation they lived and died. And this calling up of company from their graves did publish to all the world, not only that the Lord was risen, according to his so frequent and repeated predictions, but that he meant to raise up all his servants, and that all who believe in him should be partakers of the resurrection.

4. When the soldiers observed that Jesus was dead, out of spite and impotent ineffective malice, one of them pierced his holy side with a spear ; and the rock being smitten it gushed out with water and blood, streaming forth two sacraments to refresh the church, and opening a gate that all his brethren might enter in, and dwell in the heart of God. And so great a love had our Lord, that he suffered his heart to be opened, to show that, as Eve was formed from the side of Adam, so was the church to be

from the side of her Lord, receiving from thence life and spiritual nutriment; which he ministered in so great abundance, and suffered himself to be pierced, that all his blood did stream over us, until he made the fountain dry, and reserved nothing of that by which he knew his church was to live, and move, and have her being. Thus the stream of blood issued out to become a fountain for the sacrament of the chalice, and water gushed out to fill the fonts of baptism and repentance. The blood, being the testimony of the divine love, calls upon us to die for his love, when he requires it; and the noise of the water calls upon us to purify our spirits, and present our consciences to Christ, "holy and pure, without spot or wrinkle." The blood running upon us, makes us to be of the cognation and family of God; and the water quenches the flames of hell, and the fires of concupiscence.

5. The friends and disciples of the holy Jesus, having devoutly composed his body to burial, anointed it, washed it, and condited it with spices and perfumes, laid it in a sepulchre hewn from a rock in a garden; which (saith Euthymius,) was therefore done, to represent, that we were by this death returned to paradise, and the gardens of pleasures and divine favours, from whence by the prevarication of Adam man was expelled. Here he finished the work of his passion, as he had began it in a garden; and the place of sepulchre, being a rock, serves the ends of pious succeeding ages. For the place remains in all changes of government, of wars, of earthquakes, and ruder accidents, to this day, as a memorial of the sepulchre of our dearest Lord, as a sensible and proper confirmation of the persuasions of some persons, and as an entertainment of their pious fancy and religious affections.

6. But now it was, that in the dark and undiscerned mansions there was a scene of the greatest joy and the greatest horror represented,

which yet was known since the first falling of the morning stars. Those holy souls whom the prophet Zachary calls "prisoners of hope, lying in the lake where there is no water," that is, no constant stream of joy to refresh their present condition, (yet supported with certain showers and gracious visitations from God, and illuminations of their hope) now that they saw their Redeemer come to change their condition, and to improve it into the neighbourhoods of glory and clearer revelations, must needs have the joy of intelligent and beatified understandings, of redeemed captives, of men forgiven after the sentence of death, of men satisfied after a tedious expectation, enjoying and seeing their Lord, whom for so many ages they had expected. But the accursed spirits, seeing the darkness of their prison shine with a new light, and their empire invaded, and their retirements of horror discovered, wondered how a man durst venture thither, or if he were a GOD, how he should consent to die. But the holy Jesus was like that body of light, receiving into himself the reflection of all the lesser rays of joy which the patriarchs felt, and being united to his fountain of felicity apprehended it yet more glorious. He now felt the effects of his bitter passion to return upon him in comforts; every hour of which was abundant recompense for three hours passion upon the cross; and thus He became to us a great precedent, to invite us to a toleration of the acts of repentance, mortification, and martyrdom; and that, in times of suffering, we should live upon the stock of expense and faith, as remembering that these few moments of infelicity are infinitely paid with every minute of glory, and yet that the glory which is certainly consequent is so lasting and perpetual, that, it were enough in a lower joy to make amends by its continuation of eternity. And let us but call to mind what thoughts we shall have when we die, or are dead, how we shall then without prejudice

consider, that if we had done our duty, the trouble and the affliction would now be past, and nothing remain but pleasures and felicities eternal, and how infinitely happy shall we then be if we have done our duty, and how miserable if not; all the pleasures of sin disappearing, and nothing surviving but a certain and everlasting torment. Let us carry away the same thoughts with us which must certainly then intervene, and we shall meet the holy Jesus, and partake of the joys, which overflowed his holy soul when he first entered into the possession of those excellent fruits and effects of his passion.

7. When the third day was come, the soul of Jesus returned from paradise, and the visitation of separate spirits, and re-entered into his holy body, which he by his divine power did re-integrate, filling his veins with blood, healing all the wounds, excepting those five of his hands, feet, and side, which he reserved as trophies of his victory, and arguments of his passion. And as he had comforted the souls of the fathers with the presence of his spirit, so now he saw it to be time to bring comfort to his holy mother, to re-establish the tottering faith of his disciples, to verify his promise, to make demonstration of his divinity, to lay some superstructures of his Church upon the foundation of his former sermons, to instruct the disciples in the mysteries of his kingdom, to prepare them for the reception of the holy Ghost. And as he had in his state of separation triumphed over hell, so in his resurrection he set his foot upon death, and brought it under his dominion; so that although not yet destroyed, it is made his subject. It hath as yet the condition of the Gibeonites, who were not banished out of the land, but they were made "drawers of water and hewers of wood;" so is death made instrumental to Christ's kingdom, but it abides still, and shall till the day of judgment, but shall serve the ends of our

Lord, and promote the interests of eternity, and do benefit to the church.

8. And it is considerable, that our blessed Lord having told them that after three days he would rise again, yet he shortened the time as much as was possible, that he might verify his own prediction, and yet make his absence the less troublesome; he rises "early in the morning the first day of the week." For so our dearest Lord abbreviates the days of our sorrow, and lengthens the years of our consolation; for he knows that a day of sorrow seems a year, and a year of joy passes like a day; and therefore God lessens the one, and lengthens the other, to make this perceived, and that supportable. Now the temple which the Jews destroyed God raised up in six and thirty hours. But this second temple was more glorious than the first; for now it was clothed with robes of glory, with clarity, agility, and immortality. And though, like Moses, descending from the mount, he wore a veil, that the greatness of his splendour might not render him unapt for conversation with his servants; yet the holy scripture affirms that he was "now no more to see corruption;" meaning, that now he was separate from the passibility and affections of human bodies, and could suffer St. Thomas to thrust his hand into the wound of his side, and his finger into the holes of his hands, without any grief or smart.

9. But although the graciousness and care of the Lord had prevented all diligence, and satisfied all desires, by returning to life before the most forward faith could expect him; yet there were three Marys went to the grave so early, that they prevented the rising of the sun, and though with great obedience they stayed till the end of the Sabbath, yet, as soon as that was done, they had other parts of duty and affection, which called with greatest importunity to be speedily satisfied. And if obedience had not bound the feet of love, they

had gone the day before; but they became to us admirable patterns of obedience to the Divine commandments. For though love were "stronger than death," yet obedience was stronger than love, and made a rare dispute in the spirits of those holy women, in which the flesh and the spirit were not the litigants, but the spirit and the spirit; and they resisted each other as the angel-guardian of the Jews resisted the tutelar angel of Persia, each striving who should with most love and zeal perform their charge; and God determined. And so he did here too. For the law of the Sabbath was then Divine commandment; and although piety to the dead, and to such a dead, was ready to force their choice to do violence to their will, bearing them up on wings of desire to the grave of the Lord, yet at last they reconciled love with obedience. For they had been taught that love is best expressed in "keeping of the Divine commandments." But now they were at liberty; and sure enough they made of its first minute: and going so early to seek Christ, they were sure they should find him.

10. The angels descended as guardians of the sepulchre: for God sent his guards too, and they affrighted the watch appointed by Pilate and the priests: but when the women came, they spake like comforters, full of sweetness and consolation, laying aside their affrighting glories, as knowing it is the will of their Lord, that they should minister good to them that love him. But a conversation with angels could not satisfy them who came to look for the Lord of the angels, and found him not: and when the Lord was pleased to appear to Mary Magdalen, she was so swallowed up with love and sorrow, that she entered into her joy, and perceived it not; she saw the Lord, and knew him not. For so, from the closets of darkness they that immediately stare upon the sun perceive not the beauties of the light, and feel nothing but amazement. But the voice of

the Lord opened her eyes, and she knew him, and worshipped him, but was denied to touch him, and commanded to tell the apostles: for therefore God ministers to us comforts and revelations, not that we may dwell in the sensible fruition of them ourselves alone, but that we may communicate the grace to others. But when the other women were returned and saw the Lord, then they were all together admitted to the embracement, and to kiss the feet of Jesus. For God hath his opportunities and periods, which at another time he denies; and we must then rejoice in it, when he vouchsafes it, and submit to his divine will, when he denies it.

11. These good women had the first fruits of the apparition: for their forward love and the passion of their religion made greater haste to entertain a grace, and was a greater endearment of their persons to our Lord, than a more sober, reserved, and less active spirit. This is more safe, but that is religious; this goes to God by the way of understanding, that by the will; this is supported by discourse, that by passions; this is the sobriety of the apostles, the other was the zeal of the holy women: and because a strong fancy and an earnest passion fixed upon holy objects are the most active and forward instruments of devotion, as devotion is of love, therefore we find God hath made great expressions of his acceptance of such dispositions. And women, and less knowing persons, and tender dispositions, and pliant natures, will make up a greater number in heaven, than the severe, and wary, and inquiring people, who sometimes love because they believe, and believe because they can demonstrate, but never believe because they love. When a great understanding and a great affection meet together, it makes a saint great like an apostle: but they do not well who make abatement of their religious passions by the severity of their understanding. It is no matter by which we are

brought to Christ, so we love him and obey him? but if the production admit of degrees, that instrument is the most excellent which produces the greatest love: and although discourse and a sober spirit be in itself the best, yet we do not always suffer that to be a parent of as great religion as the good women make their fancy, their softness, and their passion.

12. Our blessed Lord appeared next to Simon: and though he and John ran forth together, and St. John outran Simon, although Simon Peter had denied and forsworn his Lord, and St. John never did, and followed him to his passion and his death; yet Peter had the favour of seeing Jesus first. Which some spiritual persons understand as a testimony, that penitent sinners have accidental eminences and privileges sometimes indulged to them beyond the temporal graces of the just and innocent, as being such who not only need defensatives against the remanent and inherent evils even of repented sins, and their aptnesses to relapse; but also because those who are true penitents, who understand the infiniteness of the Divine mercy, and that for a sinner to pass from death to life, from the state of sin into pardon and the state of grace, is a greater gift, and a more excellent and improbable mutation, than for a just man to be taken into glory, out of gratitude to God, and endearment for so great a change, added to a fear of returning to such danger and misery, will reinforce all their industry, and double their study, and observe more diligently, and watch more carefully, and "redeem the time," and make amends for their omissions, and oppose a good to the former evils, besides the duties of the present employment; and then, commonly, the life of a holy penitent is more holy, active, zealous, and impatient of vice, and more rapacious of virtue and holy actions, and arises to greater degrees of sanctity, than the even and moderate affections of just persons, who (as our blessed

Saviour's expression is) "need no repentance," that is, no change of state, nothing but a perseverance, and an improvement of degrees. "There is more joy in heaven before the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-nine just persons that need it not: for, "where sin hath abounded, there doth grace superabound; and that makes joy in heaven.

13. The holy Jesus having received the affections of his most passionate disciples, the women and St. Peter, puts himself upon the way into the company of two good men going to Emmaus with troubled spirits and a reeling faith, shaking all its upper building, but leaving some of its foundation firm. To them the Lord discourses of the necessity of the death and resurrection of the Messiah, and taught them not to take estimate of the counsels of God by the designs and proportions of man: for God by ways contrary to human judgment brings to pass the purposes of his eternal providence. The glories of Christ were not made pompous by human circumstances; his kingdom was spiritual: he was to enter into felicities through the gates of death; he refused to do miracles before Herod, and yet did them before the people; he confuted his accusers by silence, and did not descend from the cross, when they offered to believe in him, if he would: but left them to be persuaded by greater arguments of his power, the miraculous circumstances of his death, and the glories of his resurrection: and by thus walking in the secret paths of divine election, he hath commanded us to adore his footsteps, to admire and revere his wisdom, to be satisfied with all the events of providence, and to rejoice in him, if by afflictions he makes us holy, if by persecutions he supports and enlarges his church, if by death he brings us to life; so we arrive at the communion of his felicities, we must let him choose the way; it being sufficient that he is

our guide, and our support, and our exceeding great reward. For therefore Christ preached to the two disciples going to Emmaus, the way of the cross, and the necessity of that passage, that the wisdom of God might be glorified, and the conjectures of man ashamed. But whilst his discourse lasted, they knew him not; but in the breaking of bread he discovered himself. For he turned their meal into a sacrament, and their darkness to light; and having to his sermon added the sacrament, opened all their discerning faculties, the eyes of their body, and their understanding too; to represent to us, that when we are blessed with the opportunities of both those instruments, we want no exterior assistance to guide us in the way to the knowing and enjoying of our Lord.

11. But the apparitions which Jesus made were all upon the design of laying the foundation of all christian graces; for the begetting and establishing faith, and an active confidence in their persons, and building them up on the great fundamentals of the religion. And therefore he appointed a general meeting upon a mountain in Galilee, that the number of witnesses might not only disseminate the fame, but establish the article of the resurrection; for upon that are built all the hopes of a christian; and "if the dead rise not, then are we of all men most miserable," in quitting the present possessions, and entertaining injuries and affronts without hopes of a reparation. But we lay two gages in several repositories; the body in the bosom of the earth, the soul in the bosom of God: and as we here live by faith, and lay them down with hope, so the resurrection is a restitution to them both, and a state of re-union. And therefore although the glory of our spirits without the body were joy great enough to make compensation for more than the troubles of all the world; yet because one shall not be glorified without the other,

they being of themselves incomplete substances, and God having revealed nothing clearly concerning actual and complete felicities till the day of judgment, when it is promised our bodies shall rise; therefore it is that the resurrection is the great article upon which we rely, and which Christ took so much care to prove and ascertain to so many persons, because if that should be disbelieved with which all our felicities are to be received, we have nothing to establish our faith, or entertain our hope, or satisfy our desires, or make retribution for that state of secular inconveniences in which, by the necessities of our nature and the humility and patience of our religion, we are engaged.

15. But I consider that holy scripture only instructs us concerning "the life of this world and the life of the resurrection, the life of grace and the life of glory," both in the body, that is, a life of the whole man; and whatsoever is spoken of the soul, considers it as an essential part of man, relating to his whole constitution, not as it is of itself an intellectual and separate substance; for all its actions which are separate and removed from the body are relative and incomplete. Now because the soul is an incomplete substance, and created in relation to the body, and is but a part of the whole man, if the body were as eternal and incorruptible as the soul, yet the separation of the one from the other would be as now it is, that which we call natural death; and supposing that God should preserve the body for ever, or restore it at the day of judgment to its full substance and perfect organs, yet the man would be dead for ever, if the soul for ever should continue separate from the state body. So that the other life, that is, the of resurrection, is a re-uniting soul and body. And although in a philosophical sense the resurrection is of the body, that is, a restitution of our flesh and blood and bones, and is called resurrection as the entrance into the state of resurrection may have the denomination of the

whole; yet in the sense of scripture the resurrection is the restitution of our life, the renovation of the whole man, the state of re-union: and until that be, the man is not; but he is dead, and only his essential parts deposited and laid up in trust. And therefore whatsoever the soul does or perceives in its incomplete condition, is but to it as embalming and honourable funerals to the body, and a safe monument to preserve it in order to a living again; and the felicities of the interval are wholly in order to the next life. And therefore if there were to be no resurrection, as these intermedial joys should not be at all; so, as they are, they are but relative and incomplete: and therefore all our hopes, all our felicities depend upon the resurrection; without it we should never be persons, men or women; and then the state of separation could be nothing but a phantasm, trees ever in blossom, never bearing fruit, corn for ever in the blade, eggs always in the shell, a hope eternal, never to pass into fruition, that is, for ever to be deluded, for ever to be miserable. And therefore it was an elegant expression of St. Paul, "Our life is hid with Christ in God;" that is, our life is passed into custody, the dust of our body is numbered, and the spirit is refreshed, visited, and preserved in celestial mansions. But it is properly called a life; for all this while the man is dead, and shall then live when Christ produces this hidden life at the great day of restitution. But our faith of all this article is well wrapt up in the words of St. John: "Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." The middle state is not that which scripture hath propounded to our faith, or to our hope; the reward is then when Christ shall appear. But in the mean time the soul can converse with God and with angels, just as the holy prophets did in their dreams, in which

they received great degrees of favour and revelation. But this is not to be reckoned any more than an entrance or a waiting for the state of our felicity. And since the glories of heaven is the great fruit of election, we may consider that the body is not predestinate, nor the soul, alone, but the whole man; and until the parts embrace again in an essential complexion, it cannot be expected either of them should receive the portion of the predestinate. But the article and the event of future things is nobly set in order by St. Paul; "But ye are come into the mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and then follows, after this general assembly, after the Judge of all appears, [to the spirits of just men made perfect,]" that is, re-united to their bodies, and entering into glory. The beginning of the contrary opinion brought some new practices and appendent persuasions into the church, or at least promoted them much. For those doctors who, receding from the primitive belief of this article, taught that the glories of heaven are fully communicated to the souls before the day of judgment, did also upon that stock teach the invocation of saints, whom they believed to be received into glory, and insensibly also brought in the opinion of purgatory, that the less perfect souls might be glorified in the time that they assigned them. But the safer opinion and more agreeable to piety is that, which I have now described from scripture and the purest ages of the church.

16. When Jesus appeared to the apostles, he gave them his *peace* for a benediction, and when he departed, he left them *peace* for a legacy, and gave them, according to two former promises, the power of making peace, and reconciling souls to God by a ministerial act; so

conveying his father's mercy, which himself procured by his passion, and actuates by his intercession and the giving of his grace, that he might comply with our infirmities, and minister to our needs by instruments even and proportionate to ourselves; making our brethren the conduits of his grace, that the excellent effect of the Spirit might not descend upon us, as the law upon mount Sinai, in expresses of greatness and terror, but in earthen vessels, and images of infirmity: so God manifesting his power in the smallness of the instrument, and descending to our needs, not only in giving the grace of pardon, but also in the manner of its ministration. And I meditate upon the greatness of this mercy, by comparing this grace of God, and the blessing of the judgment and sentence we receive at the hand of the church, with the judgment which God makes at the hour of death upon them who have despised this mercy, and neglected all the other parts of their duty. The one is a judgment of mercy, the other of vengeance: in the one the devil is the accuser, and heaven and earth bear witness; in the other the penitent sinner accuses himself: in that the sinner gets a pardon in the other he finds no remedy: in that all his good deeds are remembered and returned, and his sins are blotted out; in the other all his evil deeds are represented with horror and a sting, and remains for ever: in the first the sinner changes his state for a state of grace, and only smarts in some temporal austerities and acts of exterior mortification; in the second his temporal estate is changed to an eternity of pain: in the first the sinner suffers the shame of one man or one society, which is sweetened by consolation, and homilies of mercy and health; in the latter all his sins are laid open before all the world, and himself confounded in eternal amazement and confusions: in the judgment of the church the sinner is honoured by all for returning to the bosom of his mother,

and the embraces of his heavenly Father; in the judgment of vengeance he is laughed at by God, and mocked by accursed spirits, and perishes without pity: in this he is prayed for by none, helped by none, comforted by none. and he makes himself a companion of devils to everlasting ages; but in the judgment of repentance and tribunal of the church, the penitent sinner is prayed for by a whole army of militant saints, and causes joy to all the church triumphant. And to establish this tribunal in the church, and to transmit pardon to penitent sinners, and a salutary judgment upon the person and the crime, and to appoint physicians and guardians of the soul, was one of the designs and mercies of the resurrection of Jesus. And let not any Christian man either by false opinion, or an unbelieving spirit, or an incurious apprehension, undervalue or neglect this ministry, which Christ hath so sacredly and solemnly established. Happy is he that dashes his sins against the rock upon which the church is built, that the church gathering up the planks and fragments of the shipwreck, and the shivers of the broken heart, may reunite them, pouring oil into the wounds made by the blows of sin, and "restoring with meekness," gentleness, care, counsel, and authority, persons "overtaken in a fault." For that act of ministry is not ineffectual which God hath promised shall be ratified in heaven; and that authority is not contemptible which the holy Jesus conveyed by breathing upon his church, the Holy Ghost. But Christ intended that those whom he had made guides of our souls, and judges of our consciences in order to counsel and ministerial pardon, should also be used by us in all cases of our souls, and that we go to heaven the way he hath appointed, that is, by offices and ministries ecclesiastical.

17. When our blessed Lord had so confirmed the faith of the church and appointed an ecclesiastical ministry, he had but one work more to

to do upon earth, and that was the institution of the holy sacrament of baptism, which he ordained as a solemn initiation and mysterious profession of the faith upon which the church is built; making it a solemn publication of our profession, the rite of stipulation or entering covenant with our Lord, the solemnity of the pacton evangelical, in which we undertake to be disciples to the holy Jesus, that is, to believe his doctrine, to fear his threatenings, to rely upon his promises, and to obey his commandments all the days of our life: and he for his part actually performs much, and promises more; he takes off all the guilt of our preceding days, purging our souls, and making them clean as in the day of innocence; promising withal, that if we perform our undertaking, and remain in the state in which he now puts us, he will continually assist us with his spirit, prevent and attend us with his grace, he will deliver us from the power of the devil, he will keep our souls in merciful, joyful, and safe custody till the great day of the Lord, he will then raise our bodies from the grave, he will make them to be spiritual and immortal, he will re-unite them to our souls, and beatify both bodies and souls in his own kingdom, admitting them into eternal and unspeakable glories. All which that he might verify and prepare respectively, in the presence of his disciples he ascended into the bosom of God, and the eternal comprehensions of celestial glory.

THE PRAYER.

O holy and eternal Jesus, who hast overcome death, and triumphed over all the powers of hell, darkness, sin, and the grave, manifesting

the truth of thy promises, the power of thy divinity, the majesty of thy person, the rewards of thy glory, and the mercies and excellent designs of thy evangelical kingdom, by thy glorious and powerful resurrection; preserve my soul from eternal death, and make me to rise from the death of sin, and to live the life of grace, loving thy perfections, adoring thy mercy, pursuing the interest of thy kingdom, being united to the church under thee our head, conforming to thy holy laws, established in faith, entertained and confirmed with a modest, humble, and certain hope, and sanctified by charity; that I engraving thee in my heart, and submitting to thee in my spirit, and imitating thee in thy glorious example, may be partaker of thy resurrection, which is my hope and my desire, the support of my faith, the object of my joy, and the strength of my confidence. In thee, holy Jesus, do I trust: I confess thy faith, I believe all that thou hast taught; I desire to perform all thy injunctions and my own undertaking: my soul is in thy hand, do thou support and guide it, and pity my infirmities; and when thou shalt reveal thy great day, shew to me the mercies and effects of thy advocacy, and intercession, and redemption. Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God; for in thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded. Thou art just, thou art merciful, thou art gracious and compassionate, thou hast done miracles and prodigies of favour to me and all the world. Let not those great actions and sufferings be ineffective, but make me capable and receptive of thy mercies, and then I am certain to receive them. I am thine, O save me; thou art mine, O holy Jesus, O dwell with me for ever, and let me dwell with thee, adoring and praising the eternal glories of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

